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The People Next Door



# THE PEOPLE NEXT DOOR

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*An Interpretive History of Mexico & the Mexicans*

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by

GEORGE CREEL



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New York

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1926

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TO MY DEAR FRIENDS

*John and Alice Rosseter*

## About the Author

GEORGE CREEEL was born in Missouri, and after several nomadic years, began newspaper work in Kansas City at the age of sixteen. Shortly afterwards a cattle train carried him to New York, where he shoveled snow and wrote jokes. Returning to Kansas City he founded a weekly paper of his own, and commenced a bitter ten-year fight in behalf of clean government and social justice. Having carried his various causes to victory, he went to Denver in 1909, and joining hands with the progressive group headed by Ben B. Lindsey, gave pen and tongue to inspiring successful popular revolt against evil conditions. He then returned to New York, and between forceful articles for the magazines, campaigned widely for equal suffrage, child labor laws and industrial reforms. On April 14, 1917, President Wilson named him to be chairman of the Committee on Public Information, and although subjected to continuous and bitter attack, Creel drove his extensive publicity plans to complete success.

Returning to private life after the armistice—penniless—he again resumed his magazine writing. In 1920 President Wilson sent him to Mexico as an unofficial agent for the composition of difficulties between the two republics, and it was then that he began the studies and research for his present work. Other books by Mr. Creel are: *Quatrains of Christ*, *Children in Bondage*, *Wilson and the Issues*, *The Story of the Committee on Public Information*, *Ireland's Struggle for Freedom*; *Uncle Henry on Love, Marriage and Other Perils*, and *The War, the World and Wilson*.

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## Foreword

**F**ROM the dawn of time the population of Mexico has been divided into two distinct groups—a powerful minority monopolizing wealth, culture and the pleasant places in the sun, and an unorganized majority sinking deeper into want, ignorance and misery. The warrior Aztecs, rising to dominance over the tribes of ancient Anahuac, established an absolutism made still more degrading by the bloody practices of a savage priesthood. The Conquest was merely a change of masters, for while assumedly Christian monarchs issued prohibitions against slavery, all were systematically evaded when not ignored, even the Church turning the natives into beasts of burden for the building of great cathedrals.

The rebellion captained by Hidalgo, and carried on by Morelos and Guerrero, worked changes in the temper of the people but not in their condition. Old servitudes and humilities were thrown off, but that was all, for every victory remained purely political, some evil twist of fate invariably intervening to prevent fundamental reconstruction. Juárez saw clearly and coupled executive genius with his vision, but even as he commenced to build, domestic treason joined with French ambition to stage the tragedy of Maximilian's tinsel Empire. Returned to power, Juárez died before his work was well resumed, and Porfirio Diaz rose, as ruthless as he was visionless, restoring the rule of the few at the expense of the many. Madero came, a voice from the Galilean shore, but treachery evolved a Huerta.

Even the struggle for freedom, so noble in its aspiration, so pathetic in its courage, has been robbed of appeal. Revolutions at best are seldom understood or approved by other countries—France had no sympathy with Cromwell's uprising, even as England loathed the French Revolution—and evil circumstances have made the outside world look upon the long Mexican struggle as a series of mere "gang wars," more the product of irresponsibility than any love of liberty. That Mexico has had seventy-three presidents in one hun-

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dred years, although Diaz ruled thirty, is a favorite sneer. What has never been understood are the well-nigh insuperable obstacles that stand between the unhappy people and their hopes.

In the first place, the population of Mexico is not homogeneous in any sense, but a topsy-turvy heterogeneity—a mass of little-known regional groups. In a population of fifteen million, three million are pure white; about five million are mixed breeds and seven million are pure Indian. Even the Spanish infusion adds to the racial chaos, for the Spaniard is in no sense a definite European stock, but a medley of Asiatic and African strains. Nor is it the case that native races are grouped, for while each tribe has a certain centralization, thousands of families are scattered widely, and out of a score of distinct tongues, many differing so basically as to possess no more structural connection than English and Chinese, have come more than one hundred dialects.

In the second place, there is the handicap of sheer physical obstacles—long stretches of arid plain and impassable mountain ranges that divide and isolate. From the tropical Gulf level on the east the land leaps to volcanic peaks white with eternal snow, the Valley of Mexico itself, a jewel set in porphyry, lying eight thousand feet above the sea. On the west, from Chiapas to Sonora, a series of vast *cordilleras* cuts states in half and separates section from section, precluding the contacts and thought exchange so necessary to union. Chihuahua knows nothing of Yucatan, and Michoacán might be in another world for all that Coahuila understands.

Only three times has the battle cry of liberty lifted loud enough to leap desert, *cordillera*, and linguistic barriers. Hidalgo in 1810, Juárez from 1854 to 1867, and Madero in 1910—these, and only these, deserve to be called revolutions, in that they were the uprisings of a whole people. All the rest may be regarded as mere local revolts when they were not the greedy quarrels of a ruling class, centered in the City of Mexico, and shouting "Freedom" to cover mean rapacities. The handed oppressions of aristocracy, army, and church; the dead weight of their own ignorance and despair; incredible betrayals; hunger, privation, and pestilence; the isolation of mountain and plain—against all of these the Mexican people have had to struggle.

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And these are the things about Mexico that the United States does not know and has never taken the trouble to learn. Only an arbitrary line divides the two republics, their destinies are linked compulsorily and closely—yet the average American has as little knowledge of his southern neighbors as though they were seas and centuries removed. School books content themselves with inadequate and inaccurate accounts of the war of 1846; Prescott's *Conquest* has usually satisfied all adult demand for wider knowledge, and current information waits upon some Mexican crisis and takes its color from the prevailing prejudice.

There is, however, a certain measure of excuse, for racial differences, divisive enough to begin with, have been heightened by contrasted experiences. Americans, favored as no other race in history, have come to ascribe success to intrinsic merit and sheer natural ability. Confident to the point of cocksureness, we are prone to look upon less fortunate peoples with intolerance, attributing their failures to fundamental inferiorities. On the other hand, the Mexican, never knowing justice, always the victim of treachery, greed, and rapacity, and fed on hate and lies, has had native suspiciousness intensified to a point where distrust is instinctive, dominating national life and individual conduct.

It is not a condition that can be permitted to endure, for it has ever been the case, and always will be the case, that Mexico's peace is as important to us as our own, and that the stability of her government is of as vital concern to the United States as to Mexico herself. It is not alone that the two frontiers lock for eighteen hundred miles. Already millions of American dollars have crossed the Rio Grande; and as there is larger development of the oil fields, hardwood forests and hidden mineral wealth, as Mexico's full possibilities with respect to rubber, cotton, and sugar come to be recognized, nothing is more certain than that this investment will be trebled and quadrupled. When it is considered that we have been drawn into every Mexican turmoil of the past, how may we hope to stand clear of future convulsions, now that economic bonds have been added to territorial ties?

Even were these physical facts less than compelling, there is the Monroe Doctrine. For years no more than a warning to the Old

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World that America would not tolerate interference with the free governments of the New, it is now being given other and larger interpretations. Europe has come to hold that the Doctrine is of two-fold significance in that asserted rights carry equally definite obligations, and foreign powers are insisting that the United States shall assume responsibility for the right behavior of Latin-American republics. What if Mexico falls into the state of chronic anarchy that marked her national life from 1828 to 1867? What if there should be a return to that ancient chaos when the "army" named presidents, deposing and killing whenever some new candidate arose with more ingenious plans for loot? If other world powers, smarting under insults and injuries, refuse to remain passive and acquiescent, and unite in the declaration, "Either restore order or we will," what is to be the decision of the United States?

Intervention is not a new thought, despite its explicit promise of blood and suffering. A gospel of Mexican conquest has been preached at various times in the last decade, and while it was invariably incited and financed by selfish interests, it may not be denied that many of these imperialistic spasms received honest support from a large and disinterested class, either sick of outrage, pillage, and disorder, or grown somewhat drunk on Moral Duty, The White Man's Burden, and other specious catch-phrases of quick appeal to vanity and prejudice. It is a danger that will be ever-present as long as Mexico lacks firm foundations. Any day may see a bandit turn general, or a general turn bandit, launching a "revolution" in the course of which American lives and property are destroyed, or it may well be the case that Mexico's own sensitive nationalism, swollen by fears and suspicions, will force her statesmen into some ugly extravagance of gesture. There are always sinister forces to make the most of these affairs; nothing is more inflammable than popular passion, and if the man in the White House at the time happens to lack courage and vision, the result will be war.

What then? Any intervention in Mexico, if it is to be made worth while, will have to be *permanent*. It is easy enough to talk of establishing a strong government, friendly to American interests, but such a government could not endure a day without the protection and support supplied by an American army. Permanent interven-

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tion, in its turn, will lead inevitably to annexation, for with American capital flooding Mexico in the wake of our bayonets, the power of these vast property interests will grow and grow, and all this vast influence will be thrown against every attempt at withdrawal.

As for annexation, those who have preached it so glibly can not possibly have *thought through*. The peaceful absorption of New Mexico and California was made possible by the fact that Mexican rule had never been more than a shadow in either province, and that the populations of both were mere handfuls, scarcely sprinkling the great stretches of land. Annexing Mexico, however, would mean the attempted Americanization of fifteen millions of utterly alien races, different from us in every ideal, tradition and sentiment, and compacted by an undying hate. Nor can the price that America will have to pay be measured only in terms of blood and treasure. It is the respect of the world that we will lose, as well as our own, for when all is said, these things that are done will have been done for no larger reason than the protection of property, the increase of dividends.

What is the alternative? It is for the people of the United States to accept the fact that the fortunes of the two countries are linked indissolubly, and begin the business of helping Mexico to achieve the peace, stability, and prosperity that will set her institutions above all danger, whether from within or without. To use Woodrow Wilson's inspiring phrase, the republics must become "coöperating friends, spiritual partners quick with common sympathies," for "united in spirit and purpose, they can not be disappointed of their peaceful destiny."

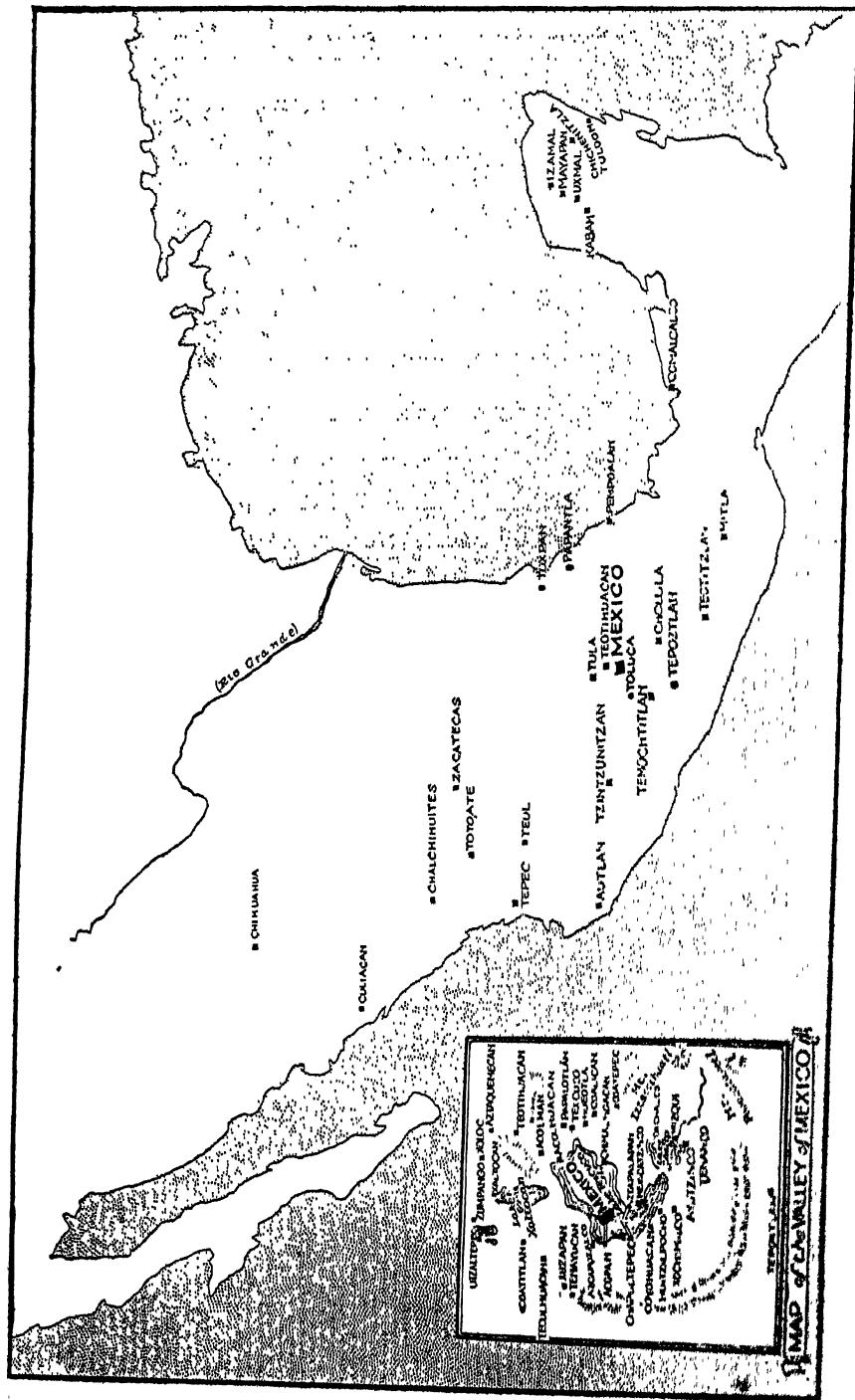
This help will not be given, nor, for that matter, will Mexico be in any mood to receive it, until there is an end to the ignorance that both peoples have been at such pains to cultivate. Out of it has come not only dislike and distrust, but under its cover lies have been permitted to become historic, dripping poison from generation to generation. It is in the interests of understanding—and the friendship that is the inevitable outcome of understanding—that this book has been written.

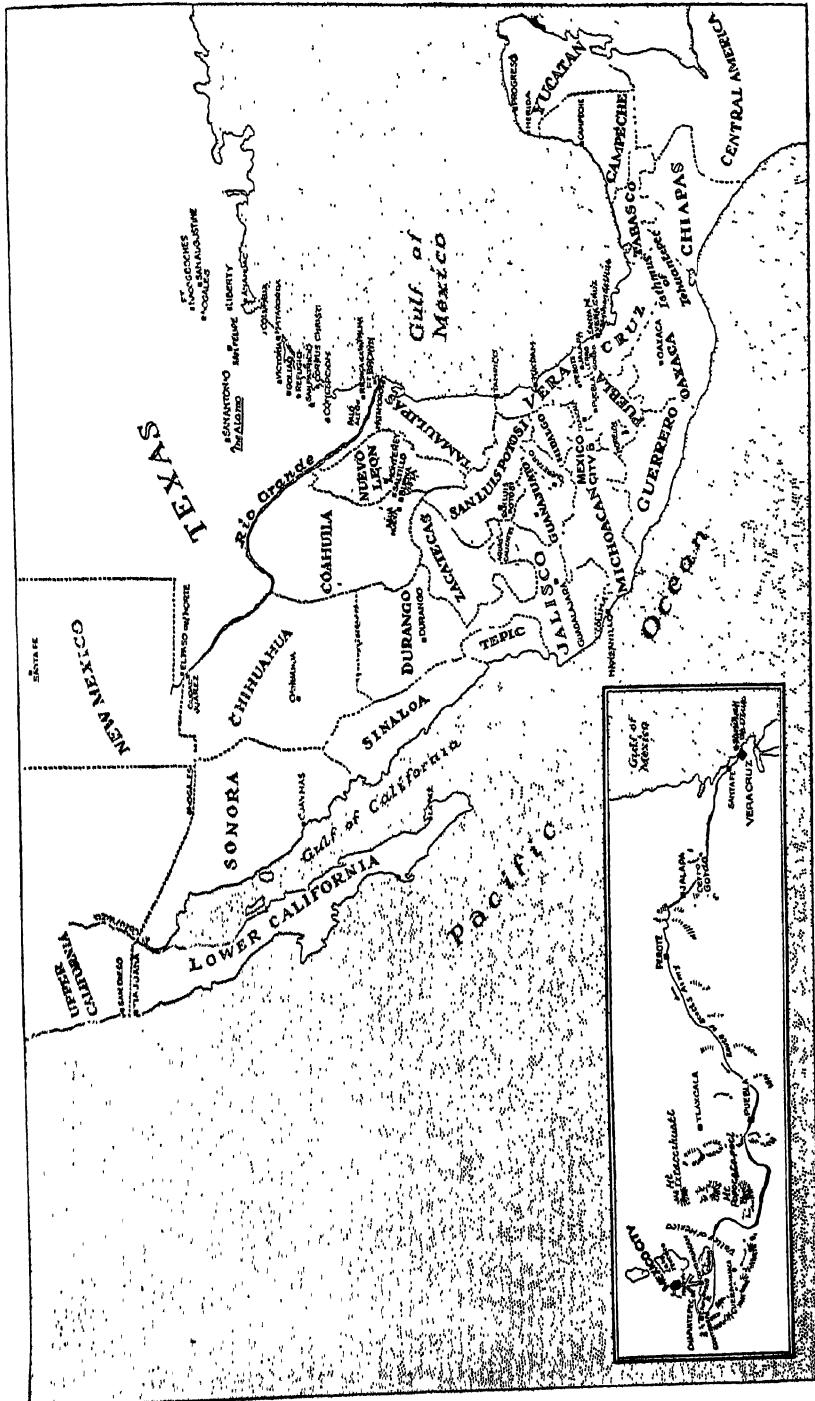
G. C.

*San Francisco, August 1, 1926.*



## Maps





MODERN MEXICO



The People Next Door



## i : The Ancient Races

**W**HEN the zealot, Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, set fire to great stores of Arabic manuscript in the plaza at Granada in 1500, he burned more efficiently than he knew, for some twenty years later one of his disciples, Juan de Zumárraga, arriving in conquered Mexico as its first archbishop, decided to court divine favor by a similar *auto-da-fé*. Gathering the picture-writings of the Aztecs into a mountain heap—ranchering temples and palaces for every piece of literature and history that had escaped the vandalism of the soldiers of Cortes—he applied his torch, and swarming priests chanted the glory of another victory over the powers of darkness. In 1572, Diego de Landa, Bishop of Mérida, imitated in his turn, burning the ancient records of the Mayas, and even shattering all proofs of their advancement in the arts and sciences upon which he could lay his pious hands. Just as Jiménez obliterated the annals of Moorish culture, so did Zumárraga and Landa destroy the chronicles that might have enabled modern science to trace authoritatively the beginnings of the New World, for in their bonfires perished the written story of those shadowy peoples who built temples and monuments from the Mexican Plateau to distant Yucatan. Scarcely more than surface facts were preserved by the tale of Bernal Diaz, the diaries of scholarly monks, and the patient deciphering of such picture-writing as had escaped destruction.

All that stood clear was that the Aztecs themselves commenced their rise in the dawn of the Fourteenth Century, and behind the Aztecs loomed a race called the Toltecs, whose peak of development was reached about 650. Beyond this was darkness. The ancient cities of Yucatan and the crumbling shrines of Mitla and Palenque—desolate ruins amid the jungle—were ascertained to be the work of a people known as Mayas, but yielded no other clew to their mighty past. The expedition of del Rio in 1787 and that of Du-paix in 1805 were largely exploratory; John L. Stephens' fas-

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cinating volumes, *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas and Yucatan*, published in 1841, are literary rather than scientific, even though enriched by Catherwood's drawings; and much the same comment may be made upon later works such as Charnay's *Ancient Cities of the New World* and Maudslay's remarkable contributions.

It has remained for science to come to the aid of the historian, and the spade and pick of the archeologist are now attacking the long-buried secrets of American origin. The work of Marshall Saville and Franz Boaz was first to stir the Mexicans themselves to appreciation and energy, and their brilliant pupil, Manuel Gamio, coming to be Director of Anthropology, gave force and intelligent direction to their research. In addition to the Mexican personnel, American institutions are lending aid, and, as a result of this concerted effort, the mysteries of America's "Egypt" are being bared and Mexico is increasingly revealed as the cradle of New World life and civilization.

Recent discoveries under the *pedregal*, a vast lava deposit in the suburbs of the City of Mexico, prove the existence of a teeming metropolitan life in the Valley many centuries before Montezuma made the fatal blunder of receiving Cortes as the Fair God whose return had been prophesied by Aztec seers. The first find was a burial ground containing blackened skeletons decorously laid out amid cups and urns and other funereal offerings—so long ago did man have faith that death was not the end. According to geological calculation, the lava covering these human remains was vomited from Mount Ajusco at least five thousand years before the Christian era. Attention was next turned to what had been accepted as a natural hill, lava-coated far up its sides, and excavations have uncovered a pyramid with flights of steps leading to a huge altar, the broad platform packed and polished by the tread of countless worshipers. It is plain that this shrine to some forgotten god was ancient and disused at the time of the *pedregal's* formation, for beneath the lava is fifteen to seventeen feet of sand, dirt and rock, and Dr. Byron Cummings, in charge of the work, does not hesitate to say that "this temple was reared by primitive Americans who lived some eight thousand or more years ago."

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At San Juan de Teotihuacan, a short journey from the City of Mexico, another of Gamio's excavations laid bare a great city of lofty temples and gleaming palaces, broad plazas and pleasant gardens—a city, in his opinion, that was the ancient Tula of the Toltecs—and beneath these ruins are the evidences of an earlier metropolis. While 650 A.D. still stands as the first recorded date in Toltec chronology, the uncovered cities attest centuries of continuous development, undoubtedly tracing back to the Pedregal Period without important breaks. Freed from the dust of centuries, a Pyramid of the Sun rises in four terraces to a height of 180 feet, the construction being adobe brick with concrete facings. The Pathway of the Dead, lined with votive monuments, and the Citadel, a great fort containing two pyramids, one superimposed upon the other, bear witness to high skill in the arts.

The eager hands of science have also been tearing busily at the mystery shrouding the crumbled cities of the south—Tikal, Copan and Palenque—centers of the Maya civilization that once filled the region now included in Chiapas, northern Guatemala and western Honduras. In Yucatan, the ruins of Chichen-Itza and Uxmal have not only been freed from the jungle's grip, but splendid automobile highways make it simple for the casual tourist to ride out from Mérida and view palaces and temples that knew their glory a thousand years before Columbus put to sea.

Assembling this and other related data—piecing it together as one would a fascinating puzzle—the beginnings of America commence to take shape and form. The continent has not yet revealed any sign of a sub-race, and the most convincing probability is that the first peoples streamed across solid land where now is Bering Strait, coming from the Asiatic cradle of humanity. The existence of this bridge stands proved by an exchange of land animals, for the Old World received the American horse, and the fossil remains of saber-toothed tigers and hairy mammoths are regularly uncovered near Los Angeles. There is equally small question that Asia was the source of the first immigrations, for even to-day the Mexican Indian retains the physical characteristics of the Asiatic, while the Aztecs were distinctly Oriental in type. Nowhere is there warrant for the dramatic theory of African wanderers driving rude craft

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across the stormy stretches of the Atlantic, for the "elephant-headed figures" found in Central American drawings, principal support of the "canoe-born origin of American culture," are now recognized as nothing more than toucan bills and tapir snouts.

Long, long ago, in the savage dawn of the world, immigration began, a thing of successive waves probably centuries apart, but all evidence points to a final severance of connection with the Old World. Whatever the cause, contact ceased, and the civilization that evolved was a purely independent development uninfluenced by inheritances and unaided by subsequent transmissions. All were undoubtedly of common stock, linguistic changes being worked by complete separations and sustained isolations, with physical distinctions resulting from differing climates and cultures. The first comers were neolithic, bringing no larger knowledges than fire-making and stone-chipping, and living on roots, nuts and such animals as their crude weapons were able to bring down. Obeying their nomadic impulses, or as a consequence of wars or climatic changes, tribe after tribe pushed down the Pacific Coast, at last reaching the Mexican plateau, penetrating the hot lowlands of the Isthmus, and eventually peopling what is now South America. Fragments broke off from the mass as it moved slowly through California, Arizona, and New Mexico, and from these came the North American Indians, their harsh environment continuing them as mere creatures of war and the chase.

In the softer south, however, where nature gave free rein to every prodigal impulse, existence soon ceased to be a savage struggle, and life began to offer the leisure that permitted cultural growth. Settling and stabilizing, the southerners came to skill in pottery and weaving, based an extensive agriculture upon the wild maize, invented a system of picture-writing, learned to mix concrete and work in copper, developed an architecture, and failed only in the discovery of iron. Probably at the same time that Babylon raised its palaces in the valley of the Euphrates, great cities dotted a tilled landscape from Mexico to the Isthmus, with kinspeople in Peru laying the foundations of the Inca civilization.

The earliest date as yet established is afforded by the Maya hieroglyphics. The famous Tuxtla Statuette goes back to 96 B.C.,

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and from the monuments so far deciphered, the beginning of Tikal is placed at 210 A.D., that of Copan at 250, and Palenque at 370. These dates, however, are without relation to the civilization itself. As Morley says in one of his studies on the subject: "Everywhere we see evidences of highly civilized communities under the direction of skilled administrators; of wealth in the form of accumulated reserves of food and labor; of technical skill in the carving of stone which halted at nothing, not even sculpture in the round. Everywhere we see the indication of a people thoroughly at home in their environment and complete masters of it." Such results are not obtained by any over-night miracle. Before Tikal was, other great cities were, and that traces of them have not been discovered is in no sense puzzling. Unlike Egypt, where Nature embalms automatically, every elemental process in Central America is destructive. The rains beat down for months, vegetable growth is a steady roar, trees rend and bury palaces, and giant creepers strangle temple and monolith. Matted jungles hide and guard, for not only may one pass close to towering ruins without seeing them, but exploration is slow, drudging and expensive.

What has been found, however, shows that the dawn of the Christian Era saw the Mayas as far removed from the neolithic as were the Egyptians. Spinden makes the flat claim that they "produced one of the four really great and coherent expressions of beauty so far given to the world, and that their influence in America was as historically important as was that of the Greeks in Europe."<sup>1</sup> The palace at Palenque, in Chiapas, invites comparison with the noblest in modern architecture, and the colossal bas-reliefs and sculptures, in stone and stucco, prove plainly that the Maya artificers had their dreams of beauty no less than the more fortunate Europeans who possessed marble for their expression. Quirigua, in Guatemala, with its twenty-ton monolith; the temple-crowned pyramids of Copan in Honduras; the ornamentation and superb carvings in Uxmal and Chichen-Itza, all are as rich in artistic appeal as the ruins of the Nile.

On every hand the glory of departed kings is recorded in hun-

<sup>1</sup> *Ancient Civilizations of Mexico and Central America*, by Herbert J. Spinden, is a work as fascinating as it is authoritative.

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dreds of statues, bas-reliefs and alto-relievos, which, together with broad terraces, lovely courts, shining temples and huge idols, bear witness to an art far removed from barbarity both in design and execution. Faced concrete was the typical construction, and, even as in Egypt, modern engineers marvel at the manner in which those early peoples solved their problems. With what tools did they cut and smooth the great stone blocks with which they built their pyramids? By what means did they transport them across long, rough stretches and lift them into position hundreds of feet in the air?

In the sciences, as in art, the Mayas were not behind the peoples of the Nile Valley. They knew astronomy equally well, gave precise observation to the movements of planets and had an accurate calendar. To quote Spinden again, he holds that the "time machine," worked out by some Maya genius in the Seventh Century before Christ, was more accurate than any since evolved. This unknown scientist, making his minute calculations three centuries before Euclid, devised a calendar so exact that it functioned for two thousand years without the loss of a day, finally meeting destruction at the hands of good Bishop de Landa.

Wells, in his *Outline of History*, is singularly in error when he asserts that "the American civilization had picture-writing of a primitive sort, but it never developed even to the pitch of the earliest Egyptian hieroglyphics. In Yucatan only was there a kind of script, the Maya writing, but it was used simply for keeping a calendar." The Mayas brought hieroglyphics to such high perfection that experiences were handed down from generation to generation, the Books of Chilan Balam being a fairly accurate chronicle of Maya life from 176 A.D. to the Fifteenth Century. Possessing no Rosetta Stone, science has been forced to grope, but when the key is found, there is small doubt that the innumerable stelae will yield a complete record of Maya origins and development.

Between 500 and 580 A.D., the golden age of the Mayas commenced to dim. Whether from soil exhaustion, climatic changes, failure of water, or pestilence, there began an emigration to the north, and by 600 the exodus was complete. The great cities of the south were abandoned and in the Yucatan Peninsula three new centers of population—Chichen-Itza, Mayapan, and Uxmal—came into being.

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About the year 1000 these cities formed an alliance, and with peace assured and every adverse circumstance conquered, Maya civilization experienced a renascence that lifted the arts and sciences to a higher level than ever before. Nothing remains of Mayapan, but the ruins of Chichen-Itza and Uxmal still stand to astonish and delight.

Some time before 1100, however, Chichen-Itza broke faith with Mayapan, and the records show that aid was received from the Mexican tableland, an influx which accounts for the strong Toltec influence in the Maya city. Notwithstanding the enlistment of foreign allies, the Itza were defeated and for three centuries groaned under the tyrannies of Mayapan. Cautious Uxmal had managed to keep out of the civil war, but Mayapan's growing arrogance finally forced a more aggressive policy, and Uxmal joined arms with the Itza. Mayapan was overthrown, but its fall dragged down every pillar of Maya civilization. War destroyed institutions and authorities, and in the wake of slaughter came famine and pestilence. The people scattered far and wide, and the coming of the Spaniards—Alvarado to Guatemala in 1523, and Montejo to Yucatan in 1527—met with resistance only from disintegrated tribes. Yucatan fought bravely enough for fourteen years, but the end was defeat and prostration.

Far less is known of the early life that swarmed in the Valley of Mexico, for there is still a wide gap between the Pedregal and pre-Pedregal people and the Toltecs. Aside from the excavations at San Juan de Teotihuacan, the only other Toltec ruins which have been brought under exact observation are the pyramid at Cholula, two hundred feet high and with a base twice as large as that of Cheops; the ruins at Tollan and Xochicalco; and the "House of the Flowers" near Cuernavaca. The reason for this ignorance with respect to the Toltecs is that their civilization lies deep under many feet of wind-blown earth. In the case of the Maya cities, it is largely a matter of removing jungle growth, while in the Valley of Mexico tedious and expensive excavations are necessary.

Enough is already known, however, to justify the assertion of a civilization equal to that of the Mayas, with an even more marked progress in the fine arts. Sahagun, repeating the description of a Teotihuacan temple received by him from the Aztecs, says that "it

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had four halls. The eastern one, covered with plates of gold, was called the golden hall or house. The western hall was called the hall of emeralds, or turquoises, because inside they had [the walls] covered with a fine stonework, with all manner of stones, all placed and joined as a coating or covering, like work of mosaic. The southern hall had the walls of divers marine shells, and in place of any other covering, they had silver which was put together so nicely with the shells that the joints were not visible. The fourth hall, the northern one, had the walls made of colored jasper and shell, put on in a very ornamental manner."

The ruins of Mitla and Monte Alban, in Oaxaca, while of the Toltec period, have features that indicate a distinct Zapotecan civilization. No buildings stand at Monte Alban, only huge pyramids, but the temples of Mitla are well preserved, and their beautiful stone work, vivid mural paintings, and especially the elaborate mosaic panels in the cruciform tombs, bear witness to a high artistic development. It is probable that the Zapotecos derived largely from the Mayas in the beginning and all had contact with the Toltecs, doubtless giving as well as receiving, but all the while maintaining their own definite status.

It is the historical custom to speak of the Toltecs as having faded away about 1100, when a race called the Chichimecs rose to sovereign power over the peoples of the Valley. It is far more probable to assume that they were conquered and assimilated, for Cholula was still a Toltec city when Cortes came, and the Toltec temples at Teotihuacan were a cult with the Aztecs, much as ancient Thebes was a cult with the Egyptians. According to the Annals of Quauhtitlan, a "Fair God," Quetzalcoatl, was the principal divinity of the earlier Toltec religion—a god of love and justice. By 994, however, this gentle faith was superseded by demonology, human sacrifice, and despotism, and these evils undoubtedly brought about popular rebellion. *Chichimecs* means invaders or barbarians, and is plainly a descriptive rather than a name, for the records show that they were divided into Acolhuans, Zochimilcos, Tepanecs, and Chalcos. Toltec rule was overthrown, and the reduction from power to vassalage naturally invited disintegration and absorption. In all likelihood it was a part of the flying Toltec army which reached Yucatan

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in 1100, and gave aid to the Itza in the war with Mayapan. Among the Chichimecs, the Acolhuans stood out as the strongest. They built their city of Tezcoco on the shore of the largest lake, and from the first constituted themselves direct inheritors of Toltec culture. Establishing stable government and whipping their weaker neighbors into submission, they soon rose to be the dominant tribe of the Valley.

## 2: Aztec Civilization

**T**HERE is no agreement as to the time of the arrival in Mexico of the Aztecs. Probably the vanguard appeared shortly after the Christian era, and these leaders were followed at irregular intervals by the bulk of the tribe. They came from the north and by slow stages, for in Arizona, New Mexico, and Chihuahua are many traces of their long halts, and doubtless there were several centuries of wandering about the Plateau before they finally drifted down into the Valley. Legend has it that their chieftains saw an eagle perched on a cactus, holding a serpent in its talons, and hailed it as a sign from the gods to end their nomadism, but it is more probable that they were caught and held by the charm of the prospect. Even to-day the Valley is a dream of beauty, cupping the sun as in some rare goblet and guarded by volcanic peaks that never lose their snow; but when great, gay-colored forests covered its slopes and scores of sapphire lakes worked its floor in blue mosaics, it must have been breath-catching in its sheer loveliness. Finding the choicer sites all taken by tribes fully able to hold their own, the newcomers settled on marshy islands in the Tezcocan lake, then about fifteen miles wide, and built their huts amid the reeds.

The first date of importance in Aztec chronology is 1325, when they were sufficiently numerous to lay the foundations of Tenochtitlan in enduring stone, and strong enough to assume an independent attitude in the politics of the Valley. They were still compelled to walk in caution, however, for high above them sat the Tezcocans, superior in power, wealth and culture, and watchful of any attempt at rivalry. Suddenly, overwhelmingly, the fierce Tepanecs rebelled, and, aided by treachery and internal dissension, captured Tezcoco, killed the king and cast Nezahualcoyotl, the son and heir, into prison. This prince's escape, his wanderings and adventures, the protection that a people's love threw about his life make as thrilling a romance as any in all history or literature, and has the added merit

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of a happy ending. Aided by the cruelties and oppressions of the Tepanec usurpers, Nezahualcoyotl gained enough followers to take the field, and doubtless, owing to this show of strength, the Mexicans joined forces with him. The Tepanecs were defeated in two great battles, and out of the decisive victory came recognition of the once despised fisher-people as a sovereign power. The lordship of the Valley was parceled between Tezcoco and Tenochtitlan, with smaller Tlacopam as a factor of equilibrium, and an offensive and defensive alliance was formed that has no parallel in the world's written record. The other tribes of the Valley were reduced to abject submission; territory and spoils were divided, power consolidated, and not once in a hundred years was the compact reft by a single quarrel. Only the Tlascalans remained free, retreating step by step to the mountains, where they built their battle-walls and founded a republic, even as the Swiss, curiously enough, were doing at the same time in the Old World.

The intellectual and cultural superiorities of the Acolhuans, or Tezcocans, was heightened by the genius of Nezahualcoyotl, easily the great figure of those early times. With the energy, vision, and iron will of a Cæsar, he compelled order, wrote a code of laws, founded colleges, revived and enriched architecture, created a literature, built broad highways, dug canals, and preached a gospel of beauty that was expressed in lovely public gardens, colorful plazas, and the development of the arts, fine and applied. At every point in the study of Nezahualcoyotl, one is struck by his curious resemblance to those old Romans who wielded sword and pen with equal facility, and turned from war to peace with the smooth sweep of a single motion.

The Aztecs had no contributions of culture to make, but they brought to the coalition the fierce courage that comes from incessant battle with life. Undoubtedly as a result of this aggressiveness, the allies carried their victorious arms to the Atlantic and to the Pacific, conquering the Zapotecos in Oaxaca, and even the scattered Mayas in Yucatan, Guatemala, and Honduras, always enslaving and enforcing enormous tributes. Nezahualpilli, son and heir to Nezahualcoyotl, was no less able, and there is bitter truth in Prescott's lament that "we, the inhabitants of the same continent, should be

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more familiar with the history of a barbarian chief, both in the Old and New World, than with that of these truly great men." Despite a melancholy strain that led to frequent seclusion, Nezahualpilli ruled well and nobly, maintaining Tezcocan leadership by the force of his moral and intellectual supremacy. When he died in 1516, however, he named no successor, doubtless owing to the difficulties of a choice, for he had managed to beget 148 sons, and in the bloody civil war that followed, Mexico came to unquestioned overlordship of the Valley. Montezuma the Second quickly reduced Tezcoco and Tlacopam to the status of vassal states, and extended and consolidated his gains until the most distant tribe trembled at his name.

It is as amusing as illuminating to note the similarity of method which marks politicians regardless of age and race. Montezuma had never heard of Cincinnatus, yet when the nobles came to tell him of his election as emperor, they found him sweeping the temple stairs, poorly clad and incredibly humble. The pose was soon put aside, for his nature was cruel and tyrannical, and as the years went by he fell more and more under the influence of the priesthood. Nezahualpilli's death, robbing Montezuma of his one wise counselor, saw an increase in oppression and a multiplication of the savage religious rites that turned Tenochtitlan into a slaughter house. Although the coming of Cortes found the great Tribute Roll holding the names of every neighbor save the Tlascalans and the Tarascans of Michoacán, the foundations of Aztec power were crumbled, and glory tottered to its fall.

There is small point in attempting to differentiate between the races and cultures of Anahuac. Not only were all of common stock, but military domination broke down existing isolations, and at the last there was the common pool of assets which we know as Aztec civilization. Any accurate estimate as to its degree is impossible, for, aside from Zumárraga's bonfire, large-scale obliterations are the natural result of complete conquests. From the pages of Sahagun, Motolinia, Martyr, Bernal Diaz and the Anonymous Conqueror, however, and from the research of modern archeologists, enough has been gathered to permit a fairly authoritative restoration of the political and cultural development that the Spaniards interrupted.

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Government, while monarchial and absolute, was nevertheless based upon decent regard of the rights of property and of persons. A system of supreme judges, appointed by the crown, gave the rule of law to every city and dependency, not even the emperor having power to interfere with the decisions of the high tribunal. Civil and criminal codes, worked out with Draconian severity, commanded honesty, morality, sobriety and thrift. Murder, adultery, theft, and drunkenness were among the crimes punishable by death, and as a further proof of advanced intelligence, severe penalties were visited upon such sons as squandered their inheritance.

Cortes and the chroniclers bear witness to Aztec skill in horticulture, admitting that not even the parks and pleasure gardens of Europe could compare with those of the fair cities that bordered the blue waters of the Valley lakes. Agriculture, while primitive as to tools, was extensively developed, maize being the principal crop. A vast amount of cotton was grown and woven into fine cloth; and the fibre of the maguey furnished a good grade of paper. The mighty forests, so stupidly destroyed by the Spaniards, were conserved by wise laws, irrigation systems turned the desert into orchards, and government granaries guarded against the misery of crop failure. In one respect, at least, Aztec civilization was far superior to any that modernity has been able to produce—*there was no poverty*. Doubtless the lot of the common man was hard, but his life was not shadowed by any sheer fear of existence.

A system of couriers and posthouses gave quick and effective communication; road building was a science; medicine and surgery were both highly developed; and there is record of the existence of hospitals for the treatment of the sick as well as asylums for the aged and incapacitated. Some advances in sanitation also must have been made, for while fully one half million people lived in the City—built half in and half out of the water—there was little sickness, and epidemics were infrequent.

Gold and silver were used in quantity, being taken from the solid rock as well as from the river-bed, and copper, lead and tin also were mined. Sahagun records his admiration of “careful and thorough artificers” equal to those of Flanders, and Cortes bore this testimony in a letter to Charles V: “Let not what I say appear

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fabulous to Your Majesty, because, in truth, all the things created on land, as well as in the sea, of which Montezuma had ever heard, were imitated in gold, most naturally, as well as in silver, and in precious stones, and feather-work, with such perfection that they seemed almost real."

Saville, in his *Turquoise Mosaic Art* and *The Goldsmith's Art*, gives fascinating descriptions of the skill attained by these early artisans, while the translator of the Codex Mendoza throws additional light on the high pride of craft that prevailed: "The trades of a carpenter, lapidary, painter, goldsmith, and embroiderer of feathers, accordingly as they are represented and declared, signify that the masters of such arts taught these trades to their sons from their earliest boyhood, in order that, when grown up to be men, they might attend to their trades and spend their time virtuously; counseling them that idleness is the root and mother of vices, as well as of evil-speaking and tale-bearing, whence followed drunkenness and robberies, and other dangerous vices, and setting before their imaginations many other grounds of alarm, that hence they might submit to be diligent in everything."

The Great Calendar Stone, now in the National Museum, stands as a remarkable proof of Aztec advance in astronomy. Giving the hour, day, month, year, and cycle, the equinoxes and the solstices, it evidences a precise and expert study of the movements of the heavenly bodies. The very presence in the Valley of this solid block of porphyry, which must have weighed forty tons originally, attests the engineering skill of the Aztecs, for it came from the quarries beyond Lake Chalco, over a rough stretch of country thick with waterways.

Aside from the Calendar Stone, a certain intellectual development is evidenced by the few literary fragments that escaped the torch of Zumárraga. Though they possessed no alphabet, the Aztecs had carried picture-writing to a point where creative genius was commencing to be permitted fairly free expression. The letter of an Aztec mother to her daughter has real value, measured by even modern standards; various rituals are instinct with color and drama; and the following excerpt from one of Nezahualcoyotl's poems shows that the *vers libre* of the Twentieth Century is by no means an original conception:

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All the earth is a grave, and naught escapes it; nothing is so perfect that it does not fall and disappear. The rivers, brooks, fountains and waters flow on, and never return to their joyous beginnings; they hasten on to the vast realms of Tlaloc, and the wider they spread between their marges the more rapidly do they mold their own sepulchral urns. That which was yesterday is not to-day; and let not that which is to-day trust to live to-morrow.

The caverns of earth are filled with pestilential dust which once was the bones, the flesh, the bodies of great ones who sat upon thrones, deciding causes, ruling assemblies, governing armies, conquering provinces, possessing treasures, tearing down temples, flattering themselves with pride, majesty, fortune, praise and dominion. These glories have passed like the dark smoke thrown out by the fires of Popocatepetl, leaving no monument but the rude skins on which they are written.

With respect to their religion, if the testimony of the Spanish priests is to be taken, the Aztecs gave their faith to a Supreme Being "under whose wings we find repose and a sure defense"; "the god by whom we live"; "omnipresent, that knoweth all thoughts and giveth all gifts"; "without whom man is as nothing"; and believed in a heaven and a hell and administered baptismal rites. These assertions must be taken with a large amount of salt, for the early missionaries were not above bold adaptation or even outright invention, in the interests of quick conversion. Certainly the bloody ceremonials witnessed by the Conquerors—wholesale sacrifices to savage gods, and dancers arrayed in dripping human skins—give small indication of a gentle faith. Judging by recent and authoritative research, Aztec religion was a polytheism, packed with special gods of every kind and description—Huitzilopochtli, bloody god of war, dominating a people's worship.

Such, then, are the known facts of Aztec civilization. Proceeding from them, however, grandiose traditions have been built up that paint the period as comparable to that of Greece and Rome. Prescott, particularly, has led in the business of glorification, and Mexican historians, following joyously, acclaim the Aztecs as a great people stopped in mid-career by the Spanish Conquest. As a result, mournful pride in a splendid past too often takes toll of the energy that

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should be expended on the present and the future, for self-pity is no less deadly to a race than to the individual. What comes much nearer the truth is that Aztec civilization had reached the limit of development, and that Cortes merely hastened its disintegration. For one thing, it stands clear that it did not have iron, the wheel, or beasts of burden, three essentials to any scheme of continuous progress. Without them, the large percentage of national energy must necessarily be devoted to soul-crushing drudgery, a condition which creates and increases human slavery. For centuries before Cortes, there must have been a growingly arrogant ruling class, occupying every place in the sun, while down below, in fear and shadow, huddled the great mass of people—helpless, hopeless, doomed.

All history points to the inexorable truth that nations are not permitted to stand still. When progress stops, mental stagnation results automatically, and spiritual decay soon follows. The disgusting degeneracies of the Aztec religion prove a dying race. By the time of the Conquest there were few remaining traces of the poetic conceptions of the Toltecs and Acolhuans. Every temple was a slaughterhouse, and human sacrifices and the horrors of cannibalism held foremost place among the bestialities that an autocratic priesthood imposed upon the masses. How is it possible to assume that energy and aspiration could live under such a black pall of cruel beliefs and loathsome practices?

On every hand there is evidence that the Aztecs, even as the Incas, were merely marking time until the advent of a stronger race, chief proof being afforded by the ease with which Cortes and his hundreds conquered Montezuma and his millions. Not one vestige of credit is to be taken away from the Great Captain, whose courage and genius gave him an imperishable, if not altogether admirable, place in history. When he burned his ships in the harbor of Vera Cruz, he had under him just five hundred and sixty-three men, one hundred and ten of whom were sailors, and his artillery consisted of ten heavy guns and four falconets. Setting out on his march for the Aztec capital on August 16, 1519, he faced the terrors of the unknown with four hundred foot soldiers, fifteen mounted cavaliers, and seven pieces of artillery. Nor is there any unwillingness to esti-

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mate fairly the full extent of Tlascala's aid. The people of the little mountain republic, blindly rejoicing in a chance to rid themselves of the Aztec menace, gave devoted loyalty to the Spanish and poured with them into the Valley to fight against their ancient enemies. Yet even if the valor of four hundred Spaniards be accepted as miraculous, if the Tlascalan allies be given all credit for superhuman bravery, and when due allowance is made for the armor and artillery of the Conquerors, it is still true that tens do not defeat thousands, fighting with their backs to their burning homes, except when these thousands have in them the seeds of defeat. What must stand clear is that the Aztec empire was rotting to its fall—just as the Toltecs and Mayas and scores of similar civilizations had rotted—and the cannon of Cortes simply hurried the day of collapse.

It is to be admitted, of course, that the Aztecs had shown a capacity for civilization, an ability to develop, and it may well be granted that had fate assigned the task of conquest to any other people, the released energy and ability of the race might have had a truly wonderful flowering. The Spaniards, however, confirmed in fanaticism by their long struggle against the Moors, living in a back-water untouched by the changes that humanized the rest of Europe, and possessing avarice and cruelty as racial gifts, were without conception of justice or mercy, and their iron heels ground hard and never lifted. With religion to excuse greed and savagery, the Conquerors swept the defeated peoples into slavery under a system of *repartimientos*, and every seed of growth was stamped out. Education, citizenship, and justice, which would have returned such tremendous values to the world, were denied, while Christian altars multiplied. The one privilege accorded the wretched people was exemption from the operations of the Inquisition, although contempt, rather than mercy, dictated that exemption. With the masses consigned to slavery, poverty, and ignorance, what wonder if hope and creative effort died, and the very soul of the race seemed to take flight, leaving only stupid, servile clay behind?

Not until the revolution of 1810 did the mountain peaks of the unhappy country echo the clarion of liberty, and it is in the struggle commenced by Miguel Hidalgo—not in the imagined glory of Tenochtitlan—that the real history of Mexico is to be found.

### 3: The Father of Mexican Independence

**F**OR three centuries Spanish rule in Mexico was absolute and almost undisputed. The conquered natives, doomed to slavery, either toiled on the estates of their new masters or sweated in the rebuilding of cities and the construction of palaces and cathedrals. Cortes, unresting, went down to the Pacific by way of Michoacán, located ports, subjugated rich Oaxaca and colonized the Gulf Coast to where Tampico now stands. Olid was sent to Honduras on an errand of conquest, Alvarado to Guatemala, and Sandoval to the north. Receiving news of Olid's assertion of independent power, Cortes marched away to administer punishment in person—a journey terrible in its hardships and barren of any great results. For a moment he looked to the Isthmus and planned an expedition that might well have carried him to Peru ahead of Pizarro, but gloomy tidings from the City of Mexico caused him to hurry back in all haste.

Returning, he found himself removed from the governorship, for Spain, like Venice, had a wholesome fear of victorious generals. Two fruitless journeys to Madrid, with much showing of scars and recitation of exploits, and on the second the Great Captain sickened, died and was buried. To-day, in the whole of Mexico, there is not a monument to his memory, only the house in which he lived at Coyoacan and his crumbling palace on the sunny slopes of Cuernavaca. As he lay in a shabby little Spanish village, waiting death, accusing shadows must have clustered thick, opening that iron soul to unhappy doubts, for in his will he wrote: "It has long been a question whether one can conscientiously hold property in Indian slaves. Since this point has not yet been determined, I enjoin it on my son, Martin, and his heirs, that they spare no pains to come to an exact knowledge of the truth; as a matter which deeply concerns the conscience of each of them, no less than mine."

Only the dying Cortes felt any such misgiving. Viceroy succeeded viceroy, each bringing fresh hordes of parasites, and all confronted

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with the task of lining their own pockets, and at the same time meeting the insatiable greed of the royal master. Driven by these twin necessities, they marched north and south, east and west, seeking gold and silver primarily, but killing and enslaving incidentally. Montejo conquered Yucatan, others carried the flag of Spain up the Pacific Coast to what is now Oregon, and Coronado, pushing far north, may have marched until he looked upon the waters of the Mississippi. They failed to discover California's mineral wealth, but it was one of few oversights, for virtually every Mexican mining district in operation to-day was opened by the *conquistadores*. Despite crude methods, by 1800 more than ten billion dollars' worth of precious metals had been transported to Spain.

Father Motolinia sadly records that the tributes exacted were "so excessive that all the Indians could scrape together or search for could not suffice," and Peter Martyr, another famed for mercy, wrote that "our men's insatiable desire for gold so oppressed these poor wretches with extreme labor and toil, whereas before they lived pleasantly and at liberty . . . that many of them perished even for very anguish of mind." Within fifty years from the Conquest, the native population had been reduced by half and the balance were without hope save in death.

Power, guarded jealously enough in the beginning, continued to be concentrated, and at the dawn of the Nineteenth Century, wealth and privilege were entirely in control of a ruling class composed of the Church, land-owners and rich merchants—Spaniards all. Exempted by a system of *fueros* from the operation of both civil and criminal law, in control of taxation machinery and the army, there was no source of authority and profit that the hierarchy and aristocracy did not own or manipulate. The land, parceled out in royal grants, was largely divided between the two groups; the lordly dwellings of the *haciendados* dominating vast areas, and every other mile of landscape being dotted with cathedrals, convents or monasteries. The good Bishop Montufar, in one of his many protests to the Council of the Indies, painted a picture of this orgy of construction that is well worth preserving:

"A remedy has to be found against the great expenditures and waste, in personal services and sumptuous and superfluous struc-

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tures which the monks erect in the towns of said Indians, all at the latter's expense. As for the building of monasteries, these are so extravagant in some parts, and where may not be more than two or three monks, that they would be too big for Valladolid even; and a house may be once built when another monk comes, and it seems to him it should be torn down and rebuilt on another site, he goes and does it. He gets the Indians to do the work, by turns five and six thousand, without paying them any wages, not even a morsel of bread that they might eat; and by turns they bring them to said work from a distance of four, six and twelve leagues . . . and they die while they are building such structures from the work to which they are not accustomed, and for lack of food and from being far away from their families and homes."

The Church being the only money lender, for there were no banks, usury added to its already vast holdings until fully four-fifths of the land was in its possession. By 1810, the wealth of the Church was conservatively estimated at two hundred and fifty million dollars, while the tithings of the twelve bishops ran close to six hundred thousand dollars annually, not even Roman pro-consuls living more royally. The Indians, left little enough by civil and military, were leached of their remaining *centavos* by ecclesiastical extortions, and while the *Virgin de los Remedios* preened in jewel-crusted robes worth three million dollars, babies died at the dry breasts of their starving mothers.

Only Spanish vessels, carrying Spanish goods, were permitted to anchor before Vera Cruz and Acapulco, the one exception being an annual importation of Chinese silks and furniture for the adornment and delight of the ruling classes. Domestic manufactures were forbidden, oppressive laws put the whole burden of taxation on the backs of the people, and monopolies of every kind gave wealth to the few at the expense of the many.<sup>1</sup> As the Indians themselves were as much outside the national life as the beasts of the field, the full force of these many tyrannies rested entirely upon the *creoles*, Mexican-born children of Spanish parents, and the *mestizos*, half Spanish, half native. These two classes were barred from military,

<sup>1</sup> In 1624, Viceroy de Galvez and Archbishop de la Sema fought like fishwives over the seed monopoly, the ruler finally clapping the churchman into prison, and the prelate excommunicating the viceroy.

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professional, political and business careers, and even in the Church could not rise above the humble position of parish priest. In addition there were social distinctions that gave the most ignorant Spain-born a right to despise all Mexican-born, even when in direct line from the original conquerors.

In 1800 the Old Spaniards, as they were called, numbered about ten thousand as compared to six hundred thousand *creoles* and one million five hundred thousand *mestizos*; yet as one *oidor* arrogantly exclaimed, "While a Manchego mule or a Castilian cobbler remains in the country, his is the right to rule." Or as a noble viceroy, the Marquis de Croix, exclaimed as late as 1766, "Let the people of these dominions learn once and for all that they were born to be silent and to obey, and not to discuss or have opinions in political affairs."

The reign of Charles III brought a betterment of conditions, for this strangely liberal monarch—he supported the cause of American independence among other surprising acts—not only curbed the rapacities of the religious orders in Mexico, but made *creoles* and *mestizos* eligible to preferment in church, army, and local government. It was a fleeting glimmer of sunshine, however, for Charles IV, ascending the Spanish throne in 1788, rescinded many liberal decrees and returned Mexico to the old absolutism. The mischief, however, was done. A despised class had had its taste of freedom and aspiration, many *creoles* and *mestizos* having risen to fairly high place, and while edicts could take privileges away, their old humility was gone forever. Rebellion commenced to be plotted as a matter of course, but the might of Spain was a terror that chilled the hearts of the boldest. Then came 1808 with its revelation of Spanish power as an empty shell.

Charles IV, a beefy moron without other interest than the chase, had been at all times the pawn of his wife, and the Queen, in turn, was ruled by her youthful lover, one Manuel Godoy. Out of her infatuation she heaped him with honors, titles, and wealth, until, as President of the Council of Castile and *generalissimo* of the armies of Spain, he was *de facto* king. To show the full extent of his power, Godoy openly maintained other mistresses, the middle-aged Queen not daring to indulge in jealousy.

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Naturally preferring the bedroom to the battlefield, the royal favorite spared no treachery in trying to keep Spain out of the European convulsion precipitated by Napoleon's rise. Dealing first with England and then with France, he finally made an alliance with Bonaparte, completely deceived by the Corsican's glowing promises. Sick of corruption and oppression, the people rose at last in 1808, and even as the royal household tried to flee the country, mobs tore Godoy from hiding and dragged him through the streets to a dungeon. To save this wretched life, the Queen forced Charles to abdicate, and on the instant his son leaped to the vacant throne as Ferdinand VII.

At the same time, French columns under Murat were hurrying to Madrid, and when the new king reached his capital he found the violent marshal in full charge. Ferdinand fawned, and his father, deciding to withdraw his abdication, also fawned. From Bayonne, Napoleon sent word that he was on his way to decide these warring claims, and, as he had foreseen, both parties raced across the frontier to give him sycophantic escort. With them in his power, the Corsican forced both Charles and Ferdinand to abdicate, sent the whole sorry crew to interior France as prisoners, and put Joseph Bonaparte on the Spanish throne.

As a consequence of these happenings in Spain, Mexico was quickly called upon to make certain decisions, for while Bonaparte demanded allegiance, revolutionary committees in Seville and Cadiz ordered loyalty to exiled Ferdinand, "the one true sovereign." Like all ruling classes, the Old Spaniards in Mexico were more concerned with privileges than with patriotism, and after calmly surveying the situation from angles of selfish interest, were much inclined to favor King Joseph. The Bonapartist régime would be autocratic, they knew, while Ferdinand's supporters were already promising reforms by way of arousing popular enthusiasm.

*Creoles* and *mestizos*, however, were equally quick to see their own chance of profit in the Spanish situation, and had the good fortune to find a spokesman with all the courage and eloquence of a Patrick Henry. Even as the hierarchy and the grandes gathered to transfer allegiance to King Joseph, young Francisco Primero Verdad stunned the convocation by asserting that crowns could not be ban-

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died from hand to hand like copper coins. Declaring that the abdication of Ferdinand had restored the sovereignty of Mexico to the Mexican people, he demanded a provisional government until such time as the popular will could be registered.

Iturriigaray, viceroy at the time, gave full assent to the proposition, for a great ambition had seized him, and out of the process of change he thought to create a throne for himself. The Old Spaniards were quick to catch the meaning of this complacence, and a night assault deposed Iturriigaray and imprisoned Verdad and his associates. Pedro de Garibay, octogenarian commander-in-chief of the army, was put in charge of the government, and inaugurated a reign of terror by murdering Verdad in his cell. Within a year the total unfitness of the bloodthirsty old man became so apparent that he was superseded by Francisco Javier de Lizana, the scheming, autocratic Archbishop of Mexico. Encouraged by these divisions and changes, the *creoles* and *mestizos* renewed their efforts and vigorously fanned every flame of discontent and agitation. Many were merely vocal, but Miguel Hidalgo y Costillo, parish priest in the little town of Dolores, gave the rebellion form and courage.

Considering that independence has been humanity's instinctive passion from the dawn of time, it is strange indeed that the literature of freedom has never been able to attain any degree of universality. The Napoleons of the world are pedestaled in the history of every land, but those who gave their lives that liberty might not perish from the earth must rest content with local fame. What, for instance, does the average American know of Hidalgo, "the Father of Mexican Independence"? Or of Simón Bolívar, who expelled Spanish power from South America, giving Venezuela, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, and Ecuador popular government and free institutions? Or of San Martín, the liberator of Chile? Of John Ball, Scanderbeg, John Hus, Mazzini and Garibaldi? The lives of such men are great battle cries—liberty bells that should be hung in the hearts of freemen everywhere—yet the peal of each is scarcely more than parochial.

All too little is known of Hidalgo even in Mexico. He lived at a time when there was but one newspaper in the country—when the exchange of ideas was forbidden by law—and the Holy Inquisition

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spared no pains to destroy everything that might perpetuate his memory. What facts endure show that he was born on May 8, 1753, in the jurisdiction of Penjamo in the present State of Guanajuato, entering the world as a *creole*, for his parents, although of pure Spanish blood, had both been born in Mexico. It was in the liberal reign of Charles III, however, and Miguel's father, a man of ambition as well as means, took advantage of the new dispensation to give his son an education and possible career. His primary schooling is not recorded, but in his later years the boy appears as a student in the Royal and Primitive College of San Nicolas Obispo in Valladolid, an institution founded by the Jesuits soon after the Conquest.

The ability of the youth stands proved by the fact that he was only seventeen when he was given the degree of Bachelor of Arts, and that the degree of Bachelor of Theology came to him in his twentieth year. Ordained a priest, the brilliancy of the young scholar earned him the high post of Rector in San Nicolas, and as the direct result of this appointment, Valladolid soon became a revolutionary as well as an intellectual center. The maladministration of the viceroys, the injustices that weighed a people down, aroused Hidalgo's passionate resentment, and he preached a gospel of reform not only in the College but throughout the entire community. The bold sweep of his mind hurdled every barrier, and he even mastered English for the translation of the treatises of Jefferson and Paine and the Declaration of Independence.

These activities, impossible of concealment, resulted in Hidalgo's "rustication," and from 1785 to 1800 he served as a parish priest, first in Colima and later in San Felipe, a small village in Guanajuato. Punishment, however, wrought no change in his convictions, and when the French Revolution shook the world, he learned French in order to translate the addresses and arguments of its leaders. The death of Charles III had revived the Holy Inquisition, and its spies were soon baying at Hidalgo's heels. In 1800, formal charges embodying every crime from unorthodoxy to treason were filed against him, witnesses testifying that he read prohibited books, that he was guilty of heretical utterances, that he regarded monarchs as tyrants and was without respect for established au-

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thority. Although escaping severe punishment through the influence of powerful friends, he was driven from his parish, and for three years wandered aimlessly from town to town.

It proved a period of profound change for the bookish priest. The poverty-stricken, nomadic existence, bringing him into intimate contact with every class and condition, carried Hidalgo out of the backwaters of mere political reform and swept him into the living stream. His humanity, a cloister product, became warm and confident, embracing even the despised Indians, and at last he saw his country as a whole, not *creoles* and *mestizos* only, but the great mass of enslaved natives as well. Slowly, for he was no emotionalist, his views broadened to acceptance of the truth that remedy did not lie in reform, but in a revolution that would completely destroy Spanish power.

Influential friends having remained at work, the ban of the Inquisition was lifted sufficiently in 1803 to permit Hidalgo to succeed his brother as curate of the Church of Dolores in Guanajuato, not a high position by any means, but one affording opportunity for him to reduce preaching to practice. Using his own salary and borrowing widely, he established a number of coöperative enterprises—porcelain and textile factories, potteries, blacksmith shops, vineyards, silkworm cultivation—and accompanied this industrial development by enlarging and enriching the sources of education. These activities, every one forbidden by law, won him the attention of the Inquisition for a third time, but after long deliberation the authorities contented themselves with destroying his coöperative enterprises and solemnly uprooting the vineyards and mulberry groves.

As a matter of course, the far-visioned Hidalgo was quick to see the significance of events in Spain, and from obscure Dolores he followed with passionate interest the whirl of events that culminated in the arrest of Iturrigaray and the death of Verdad. By 1810, every ship was bringing fresh news of disaster to the Spanish arms, and from the South American colonies came the inspiring report that Simón Bolívar had taken the field in open rebellion against the rule of Spain. Convinced that the time for action had come at last, Hidalgo put his proposal for an armed uprising squarely before

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the small revolutionary group in Queretaro that he had been leading and inspiring for a full two years.

The personnel of this body, which masqueraded as a literary club, is illuminative with respect to the sweep of the sentiment for independence, for among its members were Ignacio Allende, rich, well-born and a captain in the army; Pérez the *alcalde*; Ignacio Al-dama, lawyer of repute; and Josefa María Ortiz de Domínguez, wife of the *corregidor*. All in the movement were of Spanish blood, and, as in every other revolution in the history of armed protest, the leaders were "intellectuals." The masses, even as the proletariat of all times and all countries, had been cowed to the point where submission was a habit of life, and huddled like cattle unable to escape until a superior intelligence opened the gates.

Hidalgo's ideas were adopted without hesitation, and there was tentative decision to make the announcement of Mexican independence in December. The priest adored Thomas Jefferson, and had much of the same emotional quality, but neither was he without the shrewd practicality of Washington. The waiting time was to be employed in establishing contact with groups in other cities, and in the collection of arms and supplies. This program was advancing hopefully when treachery revealed the plans of the conspirators to the authorities. In Valladolid a young army officer, Agustín Iturbide, after accepting membership in the local revolutionary society, turned traitor, and in the papers seized were documents revealing the existence and plans of the Queretaro group. Risking death, the dauntless wife of the *corregidor* managed to get word to Pérez, who set forth at once to carry the warning to his fellows.

## 4: El Grito de Dolores

PEREZ' race through the night is Mexico's "Ride of Paul Revere." At San Miguel he found Allende and Aldama, and the three spurred hard to Dolores, reaching the village after midnight and calling Hidalgo from his bed. All seemed lost, but the indomitable priest pointed out the futility of flight and urged bold action as their one chance of success. Hurrying to his church he pulled the bellrope with resolute hand, and when servants and neighbors assembled, told them of the discovery of the plot and the decision to strike. Arming hastily, the little group freed all political prisoners from the local jail, then marched to the barracks, where the soldiers voted to follow Allende, their captain.

At dawn on Sunday, the sixteenth of September—now Mexico's national holiday—the people trooped in from far and near to mass, and after its celebration Hidalgo addressed the congregation. In simple, burning words he described the evils that cursed the land, setting forth in detail the plans and hopes of the revolutionists, ending with an impassioned appeal for the courage that would dare death in the pursuit of liberty. A great cry rose as he finished—"el Grito de Dolores"—and the war of Mexican independence had begun.

The insurgents, numbering about six hundred, left Dolores at noon, and as they marched, thousands of Indians ran from the fields and villages to join them. Influenced by this fact, various Mexican historians have made bold to picture Hidalgo's movement as an "agrarian revolution"—a native uprising for land and liberty—but it is far more likely that the real cause of *peon* volunteering was drama, not economics. In passing through a hamlet, one of the soldiers rushed into the parish church, tore from the altar a painting of the Virgin of Guadalupe—Mexico's patron saint—and tied it to his pike-staff as a gonfalon.

The Indians, seeing their beloved priest marching to war with the image of the blessed Virgin floating before him, received the

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impression that the Spaniard, in addition to his other crimes, had even turned against God, and vaguely figured the expedition as part of a plan of divine chastisement. While Hidalgo himself undoubtedly saw beneath the political down to the economic, Allende, Aldama, and the others had no more in mind than the release of the *creoles* and *mestizos* from the odious rule of Spain. Spanish themselves, in blood and prejudices, regard for the welfare of the native population was at all times remote from their calculation.

At San Miguel, Allende's home, the garrison came over to the insurgents in a body, and the town itself surrendered without attempt at resistance. In an effort to gain such organization as the character of the motley horde permitted, companies were formed, the firearms that had been seized were distributed, and local forges were used in the manufacture of pikes, knives, bows and arrows. From every quarter superstitious natives rallied to the banner of the Virgin, and it was an army of twenty thousand that reached the gates of Celaya. The capitulation of this fairly important town was instant and abject, but the Indians paid small attention to the promise of mercy given by Allende. Victory had released three hundred years of hate, and when the killing and burning and pillaging came to an end, few of the Spanish residents were left alive.

In the bitter recriminations that followed, certain fundamental differences in points of view were brought to the surface. Allende, like all professional soldiers, looked upon war as a game to be played in precise accordance with established rules. Anticipating The Hague conferences by one hundred years, he wanted killing done by code, and with careful regard for all military proprieties. Nor was the host of disorderly, untrained Indians any less offensive, with their refusal to drill and their ignorance of the fine points of war's ritual. In a passion of fury he urged their immediate disbandment, insisting that reliance could be placed only in troops of Spanish blood.

Although equally sickened by the excesses of the Indians, Hidalgo held that killing was killing, and with his whole soul he rejected the fine-spun theory that anything so essentially barbarous as war could ever be codified into drawing-room practice. Moreover, he had supreme faith in the spiritual value of numbers, and refused to have the Indians dismissed. About the wild throng, streaming

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to death with the image of the Virgin high above them, there was a suggestion of the Crusades, and he visioned Jerichos crumbling before sheer moral might. Out of the dispute came a necessary determination as to status. Even Allende, after consideration, did not oppose the selection of Hidalgo as *generalissimo*, and accepted the rank of captain-general, with Aldama and Mariano Jiménez as lieutenant-generals.

As recruits poured in from far and near—some *creoles* and *mestizos*, but Indians for the most part—the happy conviction grew that the whole country had heard “the cry of Dolores” and was in rebellion. Some were for marching at once upon the City of Mexico, but Guanajuato was only fifty miles away, rich in money and military supplies. Here the revolution met its first real check, for the royalist commander returned a contemptuous answer when called upon to surrender. Five days of hard fighting were required to carry the outer defenses, and then the assault fell back before the stubborn walls of the *Alhondiga de Granaditas*, a huge storehouse admirably fitted to serve as a fortress. While victory hung in the balance, Pipila, a humble peon, placed a stone slab on his shoulders and under its cover set fire to the doors, a deed helpful enough in itself, but even more inspirational in its heroism.

In the City of Mexico, Archbishop Lizana had been succeeded by Francisco Javier Venegas, a fairly capable soldier sent by the Cadiz parliament that ruled in the name of Fernando VII. The Old Spaniards accepted him, surrendering their Bonapartist prejudices, for the very good reason that they did not dare risk division, with Hidalgo in the field. The new viceroy was inclined to treat the revolution as a local riot at first, but the fall of Guanajuato compelled a more serious view, and in addition to extensive military preparations, he put prices on the heads of Hidalgo and his generals. Following this, he called the Church to his aid, and the priest and followers alike were denounced as traitors to God and country and formally excommunicated with bell, book and candle. “Since when,” asked Hidalgo in answer, “has servility to Spanish despotism been the test of a true Catholic? Open your eyes, Americans! Our enemies are but using religion as a veil to hide their plans for our continued enslavement.”

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Ignoring threats and excommunication alike, Hidalgo left Guanajuato and led his hosts on the ninety-five mile march to Valladolid. His way was a triumphal procession, for town after town welcomed him as a deliverer, and at the end the ancient city threw wide its gates. At last there seemed firm ground upon which to rest the desperate hope born so feebly in the little church of Dolores. Advertised by success, the army had grown to eighty thousand, and to the riches captured in Guanajuato, opulent Valladolid contributed additional millions, and, what was even more important, munitions and supplies. Hailed as a liberator, and more than ever determined to drive home the meaning of the revolution, Hidalgo issued proclamations abolishing slavery in every form. A gesture, perhaps, but it at least establishes the basic human purpose that permeated every phase of the priest's political program.

Gone now were the doubts of Allende. Intoxicated by victory, and convinced at last that the wild bravery of the Indians was ample compensation for their lack of discipline, he urged an immediate advance upon the City of Mexico. Hidalgo vigorously opposed the step, insisting that it were better to delay any crucial test of strength until the revolution intrenched itself more strongly in states where the Spanish garrisons were few and weak. To march upon the City was to invite battle with the very flower of the vice-regal army, and he branded such a course as criminally unwise. Allende, Aldama, and Jiménez, however, carried away by their own reaction, overruled this judgment, and the eighty thousand—less than two thousand of them possessing firearms—once more flew the banner of the Virgin to the breeze.

In the mountain pass of Las Cruces, out from the city of Toluca, the insurgents were met by General Torcuato de Trujillo with Agustín Iturbide, the traitor, at his side. All day the battle raged, the Indians dying by thousands as they charged the Spanish artillery, pathetically attempting to stop the deadly fire by putting their straw hats over the muzzles of the guns. In the hour when his defeat seemed certain, Iturbide flew the white flag for a truce, but as the unsuspecting revolutionists advanced for parley, the degenerate soldier reopened fire and in the confusion that followed, the royalists managed to effect a successful retreat.

## El Grito de Dolores

It was indeed a great victory, but its cost appalled, for when morning dawned, ten thousand insurgent dead were counted on the field. Reassembling his forces as effectively as possible, Hidalgo pursued the flying army of Trujillo to within fifteen miles of the City of Mexico, but in the moment when complete success seemed certain, a strange paralysis seemed to possess him. Whether he feared to trust his dwindled, superstitious troops against stone walls and thundering guns, or whether he believed that the seeming defenselessness of the City masked a trap, a retreat was ordered over the protests of Allende.

As developments proved, the City could have been captured, for Calleja del Rey, newly appointed to chief command by Venegas, was marching to Queretaro in complete ignorance of the battle at Las Cruces. The retreat of the insurgents brought them squarely in his path, and at Aculco, Hidalgo's rabble was forced to give battle to the royalist army of ten thousand disciplined and well-equipped men. The result was a rout. By evening the ground was thick with the dead, and the Spaniards crowned disaster with horror by putting five thousand prisoners to the sword.

Taking the bulk of the remaining troops with him, Hidalgo fled to Valladolid, ordering Allende and Aldama to proceed to Guanajuato. This division of forces was another mistake of magnitude, for Calleja defeated Allende decisively and turned Guanajuato into a shambles. Men, women, and children were herded into the plazas and butchered, and by way of culmination, forty-one of the city's leading men were executed, with full attention to every grim detail. No apology can be made for the excesses of Hidalgo's natives, but for savage brutality and sheer blood lust, they can not compare with the barbarism of Calleja at Aculco and Guanajuato.

Hidalgo, receiving news of this reverse, decided to move his headquarters from Valladolid to Guadalajara, where one José Antonio Torres had formally established insurgent control. His entry was triumphal, clergy and laity yielding him the tribute usually reserved for royalty, and a thanksgiving mass was celebrated in his honor as he sat under a silken canopy. From this new seat of administration, Hidalgo issued a second decree of emancipation and also proclaimed the abolition of tithes. A government was

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organized and among others, Don Ignacio López Rayón, an ardent disciple of Hidalgo's professional days, received appointment as Minister of State and Business.

For years the only newspapers in the whole of New Spain had been *La Gaceta* and *El Diario de Mexico*, official government organs, and Hidalgo now put into effect the plan that had been in his mind from the first. *El Despertador Americano* (*The American Awakener*) was only a single sheet issued at irregular intervals, but it carried the message of the revolution to thousands, and is notable as Mexico's first challenge to autocratic control by the printed word.

Despite reverses, the year 1811 dawned brightly enough for the insurgents. Hidalgo, with his skeleton government and his little printing press, held Guadalajara with eighty thousand men under Allende and Aldama; Morelos and Matamoras, two other warrior priests, were winning victories in Michoacán and Oaxaca; San Luis Potosí and Zacatecas were in triumphant rebellion; and Jiménez controlled Saltillo in the north. The difficulties of the situation, however, were obvious. The War of American Independence, for instance, was the deliberated declaration of a people, not the heroic impulse of a single man. Moreover, Washington's battle line ran only from Massachusetts to the Carolinas, almost without width and through a fairly settled country. Between Coahuila and Oaxaca, however—Hidalgo's two extremes of operation—stretched a distance as great as from New York to Texas, and deserts and mountains forbade anything approaching quick communication. Never at any time, therefore, could unity of action be counted upon, each revolutionary center fighting as a distinct entity.

In early January, Calleja came against Guadalajara with a carefully selected army behind him. Allende urged a strategic retreat, but Hidalgo, convinced that his forces would never be better able to give decisive battle, ordered forward the banner of the Virgin and took the field at the head of the army. At the Bridge of Calderón the two armies met in a death grapple, the insurgents armed with pikes, clubs and knives for the most part, and possessing only wooden cannon. Their numerical superiority, however, as well as their feckless bravery, balanced the scale against the discipline and artillery of the royalists and for two days the struggle waged des-

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perately. On the evening of the second day, one of the Spanish bombs set fire to the heavy grass, and chance decreed that the wind should be blowing in the direction of the insurgents. The wall of flame forced a retreat which soon turned into disorderly flight, and again Calleja was able to repeat the butcheries of Aculco and Guanajuato.

With every plan thrown into disarray by this defeat, Hidalgo fled to Zacatecas with the remnants of his army, and on the march there was final and crushing manifestation of the undisciplined individualism that had marked the movement from the first. Allende and the professional soldiers, out of their anger and despair, blamed Hidalgo's bad judgment for every reverse, and displaced him as *generalissimo*. Broken in heart and body, the priest made no protest against the decision, asking only that he be permitted to continue his devotion to the cause.

Allende reformed his demoralized command as best he could, and was soon joined by the forces of Jiménez from Saltillo. With the passing of Hidalgo, however, there passed also the soul and spirit of the revolution, and the new leaders were soon forced to realize that not all their military knowledge could make up for these lost values. Moreover, the full weight of the Church's anathema was now beginning to be felt, for each day saw new edicts of excommunication and more terrible threats of hellfire throughout eternity for all who gave support to the evil rebellion against God and King.

Aid from the United States had been the original hope of the insurgents, but various appeals were without result, for President Madison faced the problem of maintaining the independence of his own country. The continued aggressions of France and England had driven American commerce from the high seas, and war clouds hung heavy over the new republic. Out of their despair, however, the council at Zacatecas resolved upon a new appeal, and Ignacio Aldama and Salazar, a priest, were sent northward through Texas as ministers plenipotentiary. Hearing nothing from them, for the good reason that both had been captured and executed, Allende set out to lead his few remaining followers to New Orleans by way of Monclova.

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Equally unknown to him was the fact that Lieutenant Colonel Ignacio Elizondo, the insurgent commander at Monclova, had turned traitor, making a shameful money bargain with Calleja. Across the desert the doomed caravan trailed its way, the captains in advance, soldiers straggling along in groups, and fast-failing Hidalgo trudging painfully in the rear. Elizondo and his men lay hidden in a grove about a spring, and as the parched insurgents rushed forward to drink, they were caught like rats in a trap.

Under orders from the City of Mexico, the prisoners were herded on foot across the six hundred miles of desert that stretched between Monclova and Chihuahua, chains adding to their misery. Little time was wasted on the trials of Allende, Juan Aldama, and Jiménez, and they were shot as "notorious malefactors." With Hidalgo, however, a more orderly procedure was enjoined by his holy office. Fetters removed, he was clothed in the vestments of a priest and compelled to kneel while an episcopal delegate solemnly passed the sentence of degradation. This done, his robes were torn from him, and, once again weighted with chains, he was dragged before a military court; for now that he was no longer a priest, the civil law was at liberty to have its will with him. Throughout the farce, Hidalgo bore himself with courage and dignity, finishing his own defense with these words:

Our aim and purpose in arousing and furthering this Revolution was to effect a popular election to Congress in which would be represented every individual in this country, whether he live in town, or city, or village or farm. It was our intention that this Congress should promulgate laws for the welfare and happiness of the people, and for the purity of religion in a spirit of humanity, for the people must be governed with the sweetness of fatherly commands. By these laws it was our intention to establish the brotherhood of man, the destruction of poverty and ignorance, the prevention of the ruin of the nation, and progress of the fine arts, industry, and commerce, recognizing in every one without exception the right to enjoy the bounteous production of our rich lands, and the right to be happy, thus obeying God's commands to this country.

Sentence of death was a foregone conclusion, and at daybreak on the morning of July 31, 1811, Hidalgo was led out of his cell to

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face the firing squad—a mere wreck of a man save for his indomitable spirit. After distributing a few candies among the soldiers, his only possession, and offering a brief prayer in behalf of his oppressed country, he turned his faded, weary eyes to the executioners and placed a hand over his heart to guide the rifles. The last act of the tragedy was the dispatch of the bloody heads to Guanajuato, where they were nailed to the four corners of the Alhondiga with this vainglorious inscription:

The heads of Miguel Hidalgo, Ignacio Allende, Juan Aldama, and Mariano Jiménez, great bandits and chief leaders of the Revolution, who ransacked and robbed the treasuries of God and the treasures of the King, who shed with great atrocity the innocent blood of faithful priests and good judges of the King and our Lord, and filled with ruin, disgrace and calamity, these faithful and royal parts of the kingdom of Spain. Here are nailed their heads by the orders of the Señor General Don Felix Maria Calleja del Rey, illustrious vanquisher of Aculco, Guanajuato, and Calderon, and restorer of the peace in this America.

Guanajuato, in the year of our Lord, 1811.

## 5: Blood of the Martyrs

**G**REAT ideas never fail of appeal to the mind and heart of man, for there are spaces in the soul of every race that only ideals may fill. What Hidalgo did was to give hope and courage to an oppressed people, and as his gospel spread, bowed thousands thrilled to the resolve that life should mean more to their children than it had meant to them.

With the four heads hanging high in Guanajuato, and the insurgents broken and dispersed, Venegas formally announced the end of the revolution. It soon became apparent, however, that the spirit of Hidalgo was to be as potent in leadership as had been his voice. His pupil, Rayón, who had assumed command after the departure of Allende, hurried south with the remnants of the rebel army, having heard of the victories being won by José María Morelos in Michoacán. He found a strong, well-disciplined force without thought of defeat or surrender, and it was in the name of Hidalgo that vows were taken to fight until death. An election, as nearly popular as conditions permitted, was held in the town of Zitacuaro in May, 1811, and the fortunes of the revolution were placed in the hands of a committee headed by Rayón, Morelos, and José Liceaga.

A first act of this Supreme Junta was the issuance of an exceedingly adroit manifesto designed to weld the forces of discontent into one harmonious whole. While Mexico was boldly proclaimed as an independent power, standing in equality with Spain, the sovereignty of Fernando VII was asserted and accepted, and all ideas of economic change were specifically discarded in favor of purely political reforms. The Church was volubly assured of veneration and loyalty, and as a further appeal to the prejudices of the conservatives, the army was ridded of all Indians, and limited entirely to *creoles* and *mestizos*. "Mexico for Spanish-speaking Mexicans" was the whole purport of the document, with devotion to

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royalty and the Catholic religion as sops to monarchial and religious groups.

Like all patent adventures in opportunism, the manifesto failed miserably, having no effect whatever upon the royalists, and completely alienating Morelos. This second great figure of the Mexican revolution was also a priest, and to patriotism as pure as Hidalgo's, he brought military genius, physical strength, and democratic passions developed by a lifetime of poverty and toil. Born in Valladolid, September 30, 1765, a *mestizo*, and reared in squalor and ignorance, the young José María worked as a mule-driver throughout his youth, studying, like Lincoln, by night and alone. Attracting the notice of some kindly people, who contrived to enter him in the college of San Nicolas, Hidalgo had soon recognized the young muleteer's high ambitions and great abilities, and the two formed a friendship that was to continue until death. It was more than Greek, Latin, and ecclesiastical history that Morelos learned in the ancient university—he learned of the American Revolution and drank deep of the heady wine poured by the French Encyclopedists.

There is a lapse in the record of his life after San Nicolas, for, as in the case of Hidalgo, the Holy Inquisition used every effort to blot him from the people's memory, but in 1810 he was curate of a small church in Curacao. When *el Grito de Dolores* rang through the land, Morelos quit his post and reached the insurgents just after the capture of Guanajuato. His offer was to serve as chaplain, but Hidalgo, well aware of his former pupil's bold, resolute nature, made him a lieutenant-general with commission to raise troops and conduct warfare in the south. The two embraced, never to meet again, but Morelos had the joy of vindicating Hidalgo's judgment, for from the first his success was as continuous as it was remarkable. Gaining adherents by eloquence and magnetism, he trained them with rare skill, and in battle after battle he won victories over superior forces.

Tall, powerfully built, swart of face and with fierce, eagle eyes, there was about him a fire, a color, that appealed to his wild followers much as the dramatics of Napoleon must have fascinated the Old Guard. To his side came Mariano Matamoras, another priest

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of high character and superb courage; the Galeana brothers; the Bravos—Leonardo and his gallant sons; and an impetuous youth, Vicente Guerrero, who was to become president of Mexico. The Duke of Wellington, no mean judge, followed the campaigns of Morelos with admiration, praising his strategy without stint, and had the Napoleonic priest been able to join Hidalgo, effecting a juncture of armies and a union of spirit, different history might have been written.

Morelos, by reason of his proved ability and superior service, should have succeeded to leadership after the execution of Hidalgo and Allende, but in the interest of harmony he did not dispute the pretensions of Rayón and worked zealously with him until the manifesto of Zitácuaro. Admission of the sovereignty of Fernando VII, and its other compromises, were bitterly opposed by Morelos, who, more than all the rest, had felt the miseries and injustices of life. He wanted the issues clean-cut. Why mince and higgle when bold speech was the one hope? If they were to die, then let it be for principles, not quibbles. With all his might he stood for complete independence, religious liberty, and economic reforms, and when his protests were overruled, the priest withdrew his forces to the town of Cuautla, a position that virtually dominated the City of Mexico from the south.

As Morelos had foreseen, Venegas publicly burned the manifesto, denouncing the insurgents as common bandits and ordering a campaign of extermination. Calleja, marching swiftly and silently at the head of eight thousand men, captured Zitácuaro by a surprise attack, and it was only by good fortune that Rayón and his associates in political argument managed to escape. Hanging combatants and non-combatants alike, and leaving the town in ashes, the savage Spaniard marched away to Cuautla, eager to end an annoying business. Morelos awaited him with a garrison of less than five thousand, but every soldier had been trained and disciplined by the Napoleonic priest, and in addition, there was his own genius. It was in Cuautla in 1812, not in France in 1914, that trench warfare was first conceived, and when the Spaniards charged in full confidence of an easy victory, they were met by deadly fire that seemed to them to come from the ground. After an all-day battle, Calleja

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was compelled to admit the first defeat of his victorious career. All efforts were now concentrated on a siege and the City of Mexico was stripped of men and artillery.

This was the end to which Morelos had planned, for the rainy season was only a few weeks away, and he figured on the decimation of the royalist army by sickness and disease, reducing its strength to a point where fierce attack could score overwhelming victory. Those optimistic souls who lull themselves with pleasant belief in a Divine Providence that invariably intervenes in favor of the right, will find small comfort in the Mexican revolution. Just as a freak of the wind cost Hidalgo victory at the Bridge of Calderón, now came an incredible drought to destroy Morelos. For the first time in years the rain held off, and days passed into weeks without a cloud in the sky. Daily bombardment held the soldiers in their dugouts and Calleja's iron ring soon doomed the defenders to hunger and thirst. Rayón, who might have raised the siege, remained inactive in Sultepec, and after more than two months of terrible suffering, Morelos decided to evacuate. At midnight he led his followers out of the doomed city in three divisions, and such was his skill that only at the river crossing was the flight discovered. Morelos had his ribs crushed by a fall, but soldiers carried him to safety, and when the appointed rendezvous was reached only seventeen men were missing.

In his rage, Calleja butchered the men, women, and children of Cuautla, stabbing them down in the open like sheep, and even hanging, drawing, and quartering in many instances. Not all his savagery, however, could conceal the escape of Morelos and his army, and Venegas, long jealous of his successful general, took advantage of the occasion to administer a public rebuke, whereupon Calleja angrily resigned. Notwithstanding royalist dissension, disaster after disaster fell upon the insurgents, for with Morelos ill in the hills, leadership was lacking. One of the worst blows was the capture and execution of Leonardo Bravo. Nicolas, a son, offered three hundred captive Spaniards for the release of his father, and when Venegas refused, set his prisoners free as proof of the revolutionists' superior humanity.

Carefully waiting until Cuautla had fallen, Rayón took the field

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and attempted the capture of Toluca, but Castillo, Calleja's successor, defeated him easily, driving him to Tlalpujahua, where he took upon himself the empty title of president by way of consolation. While Rayón's sincerity and patriotism may not be denied, his persistence in fancying himself a military genius was at all times a source of disaster, for though unable to win battles, he stubbornly refused to give aid to Morelos, the one outstanding strategist and tactician of the revolution. One can not study him without being strongly reminded of our own General Horatio Gates, that amazing egotist whose swollen vanity and incessant intrigue added so immeasurably to Washington's trouble.

By July, however, Morelos had recovered from his injuries and was again in the field, the colored handkerchief he wore always about his head waving to victory like the White Plume of Navarre. With less than a thousand men he captured Tehuacán, Orizaba, and the rich city of Oaxaca, successes that made him as terrible to the Capital as ever Hannibal was to Rome. As a consequence, Venegas was removed for inefficiency in the early months of 1813, and his enemy, the cruel Calleja, became viceroy with title of Count of Calderón.

In the dawn of this new year the revolutionists controlled the country south of a line drawn from Tampico to Colima, the City of Mexico standing in a state of virtual siege. The one essential to success was unified command, but instead of accepting Morelos, as dictated by common sense, the revolutionists fell to quarreling, Rayón, as usual, playing the principal rôle in a tragedy of ambition. While he hung back and bickered, the royalist forces under Agustín Iturbide fell upon him, and his overwhelming defeat dealt the revolution a crushing blow. Even so, it was within the power of Morelos to have captured the City by a bold stroke. Like Hidalgo, however, he was obsessed by the conviction that the hope of the revolution lay in the provinces, and blindly turning away from the dramatic assault that might have meant victory for the cause, he commenced the consolidation of his southern gains.

The capture of the port of Acapulco strengthened him to a degree where he felt able to go forward with the project always closest to his heart. What he wanted from the first was a *government*.

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No matter how flimsy the foundations, the far-visioned priest saw the value of erecting *fixed* standards. As it was, every chieftain gave his own interpretation of principles, a condition as lacking in coherence as in dignity. In September, therefore, Morelos assembled a congress at Chilpancingo, and this body, after declaring the independence of the "Kingdom of Anahuac," set to work on the constitution that had been dreamed of by Hidalgo. Appreciating, however, the necessity of a victory to offset the disaster to Rayón, Morelos himself marched off to Valladolid with intent to capture the city.

Unknown to him, the garrison had been reënforced by a command under Iturbide, and not only was the attack repulsed, but a swift and powerful counter-attack sent the revolutionists flying in panic. Before Morelos could reorganize his scattered forces, another royalist army came upon him, and after this crushing second defeat he fled to Acapulco with a mere handful of followers. Woe followed woe. The Galeana brothers were captured and the noble Matamoras was executed by Iturbide as a common criminal, bitter news that caused Morelos to bow his head and cry, "Both my arms are gone! I am now nothing."

Rayón at once raised his voice in criticism and condemnation, and, as a result of his activities, Morelos was stripped of power. Repeating Allende's fatal blunder, the army was divided into three parts, and, as in 1811, the royalists destroyed one after the other. Once begun, the disintegration of the revolutionary movement was rapid. Morelos, after firing the port of Acapulco, took refuge in the wilds of Michoacán, while in Vera Cruz and Puebla, Rayón and the local leaders quarreled like dogs over place and power, their rank and file mere bandits preying upon silver consignments from the Capital to the coast.

Not once, however, did the indomitable priest surrender his chief purpose. Receiving word that the congress was ready to report a constitution, he came down from the hills at the head of five hundred ragged men, and the document was declared to the world on October 22, 1814, in the little town of Apatzingán. Even to-day it is a paper which may well excite admiration by reason of its courage and vision. The land monopoly of the Church was abolished, as well as ecclesiastical and military *fueros*; religious orders

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were forbidden; and among the guarantees were free speech, free press, freedom of religious opinion and free elections. Slavery was prohibited; the principle of a living wage was declared and industrial freedom planned, in clauses that sought to abolish poverty and afford protection for the worker; while the influence of European movements on the mind of Morelos was clearly shown by the abolition of personal taxation, the support of government being placed squarely on capital. The most remarkable feature of the document, however, was its annunciation of the people's right to initiate and reject in the matter of laws—in plain, the Initiative and Referendum.

The new government, so pathetic in its weakness, so noble in its aspirations, was driven from pillar to post, and finally Morelos decided to establish headquarters at Tehuacán in Puebla, General Mier y Terán being in that neighborhood with a considerable force. To lead the insurgent body through the iron ring of royalist troops was a task that might well have taxed the genius of a Hannibal, but by a series of skillful feints, cunning marches and counter-marches, he brought congress and army safely to Tenango, almost in sight of the goal. Even as safety seemed certain, some traitor sent word to Calleja and on the following morning the insurgents awoke to find their way barred by a vastly superior force. In the battle that followed, Morelos commanded the center, Nicolas Bravo the left and Liceaga the right. Liceaga's wing broke at the first shot and as the whole battle-line crumbled, Morelos cried to Bravo: "Go, protect the Congress! Nothing else matters." With fifty devoted followers he held back pursuit, and then, giving the orders for flight, put his horse at a cliff. The soft earth crumbled, and as he fell heavily, his pursuers came upon him.

Loaded with chains, Morelos was taken to the City of Mexico and paraded after the Roman manner, people flocking to the Capital by thousands to see with their own eyes the "arch infidel" who had tried to "tear God from His High Heaven." The Holy Inquisition, refusing the prisoner any opportunity for defense, adjudged him guilty, and in the presence of the hierarchy, Morelos was duly degraded by the Bishop of Oaxaca. One of the high crimes charged against him was taking the excommunication edicts issued against

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Hidalgo, and using them in the manufacture of munitions. The military authorities were no less inexorable, and despite an able defense, largely conducted by Morelos himself, sentence of death was speedily pronounced. On December 27, 1815, the patriotic priest was executed at San Cristobal Ecatepec. His last words were: "Lord, if I have done well, Thou knowest it. If I have done ill, to Thy infinite mercy I commend my soul."

With the death of their one great military leader, the armies of the insurgents dwindled to small bands that were hunted down with merciless ferocity. Iturbide, for instance, reported on a Good Friday that he had "just ordered three hundred excommunicated wretches to be shot in honor of the day." In 1816, Calleja del Rey returned to Spain to receive royal reward for his cruelties, and the new viceroy, Juan Ruiz de Apodaca, though equally ruthless, had the wit to tempt weakness and despair with offers of amnesty. Ignacio Rayón, brave for all his follies, suffered imprisonment and the threat of death rather than recant, but many leaders took pardons and laid down their arms. Some were killed, others fled to the mountains. Liceaga met with assassination, and Mier y Terán, surrendering Tehuacán after a siege of two days, accepted clemency.

It was this period of defeat and despair that Francisco Xavier Mina selected for his entrance into the Mexican struggle. A Navarrese, still in his twenties, the young soldier of liberty came to the New World as a breath of romance from the Old. He had fought against the French, then rebelled against the treacherous Fernando, and in his hour of defeat had preferred exile to surrender. In London he heard the full story of Hidalgo and Morelos and, resolving to dedicate his sword to Mexican liberty, raised money for the outfitting of a small ship. Reaching Galveston, his picturesque personality won him some four hundred followers from among Mexican patriots and adventurous Americans, and in April, 1817, he landed on the coast of Tamaulipas.

A born leader and a soldier of genius, one who might have been a Washington or a Bolívar in another time and on another field, Mina won victories against overwhelming odds, on many occasions defeating viceregal armies of four thousand with less than two hundred men of his own. Hidalgo or Morelos would have received

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the brilliant Navarrese with open arms, but the local insurgent leaders with whom he established contact manifested a mean jealousy from the first. Marching through San Luis Potosí into Guanajuato, dazzling the royalists by his strategy, Mina was finally brought to bay at a place called Fort Sombrero. Facing a dearth of munitions and supplies, the young leader broke through the ring of besiegers and begged aid of Torres, most powerful of the rebel chieftains near at hand. When it was denied after many lying promises, Mina twice tried to get back to his little command, but failed. The dashing Texans, Young and Bradburn, held Fort Sombrero throughout twenty terrible days, but lacking food, water and ammunition, the defense collapsed at last, and the Spaniards massacred men, women, and children alike.

Deserted, deceived, betrayed, Mina himself was captured shortly afterward in a ranch-house where he slept, and a few days later, on top of a high hill that all might see, a rifle volley ended his twenty-seven years of life. Ill-fated and ineffective as the mad venture turned out, there was in it the high quality of martyrdom, and the story of Mina, going from village to village, kindled an answering flame in many hearts and kept faith alive. One Guadelupe Victoria tended the fires of revolution in Vera Cruz, and in the south were Guerrero and Juan Álvarez, direct inheritors of the Hidalgo and Morelos traditions.

## 6: Independence and Empire

DURING these years of trial and struggle in Mexico, things of moment had been happening in Spain. The people, while continuing loyalty to their interned monarch, were duly appreciative of his absence, and in 1812 the Cadiz parliament framed a new constitution which provided for constitutional government and many wise reforms. It was, of course, no more than a scrap of paper, since the French controlled the country, but it had in it the high quality of hope. In 1814, however, the receding tide of Napoleon's fortunes forced him to withdraw from Spain, and his final gesture was to jerk Ferdinand VII from captivity and put him back on the Spanish throne. For six years his subjects had fought and died for him, yet the first act of the royal degenerate was to set aside the Constitution of 1812, restoring autocracy and all of its evils.

More than any ruler in Europe, not excepting the Hapsburgs, Ferdinand worked to take advantage of Europe's reaction against liberalism. Other crowned heads were stupid and brutal by fits and starts, but Spain's king, fresh from licking Napoleon's boots, brought enthusiasm and unflagging energy to the daily business of tyranny. The Inquisition was revived with enlarged powers, Parliament was abolished, religious orders were given all their old privileges, and such liberals as escaped death by rope or bullet were thrown into dungeons. Unable to squeeze more money out of his impoverished subjects, he wheedled millions from the Pope, swindled England out of a goodly sum by false promises, and finally sold Florida to the United States to replenish his empty Treasury.

The end came in January, 1820, when he attempted to send new thousands to South America for the campaign against Bolívar. The starving, half-naked soldiers mutinied, and Rafael del Riego sprang forward as the great leader of a rebellion that swept the whole of Spain. The blood lust of the Spaniard led to excesses far beyond those of the French Revolution, and Ferdinand was only too happy

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to place himself in the hands of a hastily assembled Parliament. A first act was to restore the Constitution of 1812, and domestic reforms were quickly followed by fundamental changes of policy with respect to colonial possessions.

When the news reached Mexico there was much the same consternation as in 1808. The death of Morelos, five years before, had seemed to lift every shadow from the privileged classes, and now, out of a clear sky, came a liberal Constitution and a radical Parliament to threaten them anew. To add to apprehension, information came that a new viceroy was on his way—one Juan O'Donoju—vested with power to remedy every evil, and carrying full instructions to end the rule of Church and Aristocracy. As a consequence, the hierarchy and the Old Spaniards resolved to break away from Spain and form a government of their own, the very thing for which Hidalgo and Morelos had been shot down as “vile enemies to God and King.” The difference, and a justification that seemed ample to them, was that their treason was in the interests of absolutism, while the insurgents planned equality.

Apodaca, successor to Venegas, was carefully sounded, but, whatever his faults, treachery to his royal master was not among them. Barred from help in that quarter, the conspirators resolved upon the seduction of the army, and after much deliberation, the choice of a tool fell upon Agustín Iturbide, that harmonious combination of traitor and butcher. This dashing officer and his picturesque whiskers had come upon evil days, for, chancing to add thievery to his other crimes, Apodaca had expelled him from the army. The year 1820 found him impoverished and desperate, ready for any undertaking, and his assent was enthusiastic. Regaining a military command for him was the problem, but the conspirators solved it by spreading exaggerated reports about the successes of Vicente Guerrero in the south. Iturbide was lauded as the one soldier able to crush the growing menace of insurgency, and so clever was the campaign that the fat-witted viceroy appointed him brigadier-general and furnished twenty-five hundred well-equipped men with which to take the field.

Once clear of the Capital, Iturbide put aside all pretense of warfare and commenced the corruption of his soldiers. Scattering money

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and promises of rich rewards, and powerfully aided by the Church, whose agents worked indefatigably, the entire force was soon pledged to the betrayal of Apodaca. Failing to defeat Guerrero in two battles, the next step was his deception, for domestic revolution was a stumbling block that had to be overcome at all costs. After much difficulty, the insurgent chief consented to a meeting, and in glowing terms Iturbide painted the great change of heart that had come over the Church and the Old Spaniards, proclaiming their new love of liberty and their passionate desire for independence.

The low estate to which patriotic leadership had fallen stands proved by the fact that Guerrero let himself be gulled. Iturbide had betrayed the Valladolid revolutionary group; he had fired upon Hidalgo's troops at Mount Cruces under cover of a flag of truce; Mariano Matamoras had been murdered by his orders, and his massacre of insurgents to celebrate religious holidays still burned in memory, yet Guerrero listened and believed! Freedom had already become an obsession, and in each chapter of Mexican history we shall see "independence" a magic word, able at all times to blind the people to every intelligence in life and conduct.

The "Plan of Iguala," taking the name of the little town that happened to be the place of proclamation, was announced on February 24, 1821, and contained these pledges: The absolute independence of Mexico; the establishment of a monarchical form of government, tempered by a constitution suitable to the country; the summoning of Ferdinand VII, or some member of his family, or of some other royal family, to the throne of Mexico, to reign as emperor; the establishment of the Roman Catholic Apostolic Religion as the national religion, without toleration for any other; the establishment of a junta to carry on the government until the selection of a monarch; the maintenance of all property rights; the abolition of all caste distinctions by way of insuring equality in citizenship; and the endorsement and protection of all ecclesiastical *fueros* and possessions.

It is incredible that anything so outrageously impudent should ever have been promulgated, much less received. Not only did the "Plan" confirm every evil against which dead thousands had hurled their lives, but there was plain rejection of the democratic

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Parliament and an equally plain invitation to the cruel and despotic Ferdinand to bring his scrofula, savagery and corruptions to Mexico. Yet Guerrero, Bravo and Victoria gave enthusiastic assent, and to this very day the average Mexican regards Iturbide as a liberator, somewhat stained in spots, but, taken as a whole, worthy of high tribute.

With a blare of trumpets, the lying flag of the Three Guarantees—Independence, Union, and Religion—was flung to the breeze, and, intoxicated by these glorious words, the insurgents trooped in, and ringing bells and booming cannon consummated the false marriage. As a final proof of spiritual regeneration, Iturbide marched to Guanajuato and reverently lifted down the storm-beaten, sun-scorched heads of Hidalgo, Allende, Jiménez, and Aldama—the patriots that he himself had helped to crucify.

While Iturbide worked in the south, the hierarchy was no less industrious in other parts of the country. More than general interest attaches to these plottings, for many of the men concerned in them were destined to play conspicuous parts in the history of Mexico. Antonio López de Santa Anna, a young soldier-politician just raised to high rank by Apodaca, suddenly deserted in the State of Vera Cruz, going over to the rebels he had been sent to subdue; in Guanajuato, the royalist commander, Anastasio Bustamante, declared allegiance to Iturbide, and Lieutenant Colonel José Joaquín Herrera was still another who accepted the Plan of Iguala. On the heels of these desertions, the soldiers in the Capital mutinied over night, and at the point of their swords forced the resignation of Apodaca.

It was in the midst of these happenings that the new Viceroy, O'Donoju, landed in Vera Cruz. A true liberal, he saw at once the purposes of the Plan of Iguala, but there was nothing that he could do. Any attempt to assert authority would have meant his death, and so he signed a treaty that recognized the new order. He did manage to force two changes, however, one being the inclusion of himself as a member of the provisional government; the other, Mexican acceptance of the Spanish Cortes as the source of legislative power, liberal checks on the autocracy that he foresaw. Yucatan, Guatemala, Chiapas, Honduras, and Nicaragua, receiving the glad

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tidings of independence, sent word of their willingness to join the Mexican states, and a nation commenced to form.

Where Hidalgo and Morelos had sowed in blood and suffering, an arch royalist now reaped the harvest, for Iturbide entered the Capital amid the shouts of the people and took the presidency of the provisional government. From the first he showed intent to repudiate every bargain, and O'Donoju, whose vigorous personality might have acted as a deterrent, died suddenly and mysteriously. The Bishop of Puebla was appointed in his place, and with the last restraining influence removed, Iturbide voted himself a yearly salary of one hundred and twenty thousand dollars, became *generalísimo* of the army and high admiral of a non-existent navy, and restored every evil privilege. All positions of honor, profit, and power were filled with Old Spaniards, and the *creoles* and *mestizos* were ignored even more contemptuously than in viceregal days.

The Spanish Cortes refused to ratify the treaty signed by O'Donoju and denied the independence of Mexico, but this was as the conspirators expected, and with a carelessness that bordered on arrogance, they now threw off all pretense. Election guarantees were disregarded and a hand-picked congress installed. Even so, various patriot leaders managed to gain admission, and this small group opposed strenuously the betrayals of Iturbide. The President's answer was a troop of soldiers which invaded the Chamber and arrested Victoria, Bravo, and fifteen other members.

This high-handed proceeding aroused the people to a full sense of the oppression that threatened, and out of the tumult came Valentín Gómez Farías and Lorenzo de Zavala, spokesmen possessed of faith and courage as well as eloquence. In words that drew blood they exposed the whole reactionary plot, and outlined a program of real independence: civilian government and efficient and economical administration. Iturbide, the soldier, naturally urged force as the proper answer, and his clerical advisers, convinced that the people could not be fooled any longer, gave consent to the familiar methods of autocracy.

On the night of May 18, 1822, the streets filled with soldiers crying "*Viva Agustín Primero! Viva el Emperador!*" When Congress assembled next morning, the hall was ringed with armed men,

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and the members voted to a menacing chant of "Coronation or death." When the count was taken, it was found that seventy-seven had voted for Iturbide's elevation and fifteen against, and although the law demanded a quorum of one hundred and two, this technicality was swept aside along with other obstacles and pledges. Iturbide was crowned in the cathedral, every detail being worked out in faithful imitation of Napoleon's coronation, and further legislation soon made his whole family royal. Free speech and a free press were quickly suppressed, criticism in Congress was rebuked by the arrest of more deputies, and when this did not serve to silence attack, the body was dissolved by armed force.

The tyrannies of Iturbide might have been endured, for the insurgency lacked strength as well as leaders, but the gross corruptions of his régime resulted in such widespread poverty and wretchedness that the whole country began to rumble with revolt. There was more than a suspicion that the ambitious Santa Anna, in command at Vera Cruz, had much to do with the popular outcry, and Iturbide made occasion for a royal journey to the port. After showering honors upon his "dear friend," and thanking him publicly for his devotion and loyalty, the wily Agustín insisted that he return to the Capital with him in order to receive further preferment. Santa Anna, in no doubt as to the purpose of the invitation, accepted it with due joy, but lamented the press of affairs that compelled delay. With tears in his eyes, he promised to follow the Emperor in a few days, and the parting embrace was a duel for histrionic honors.

Before Iturbide reached Puebla, Santa Anna was in revolt at the head of his military command. Joined by Victoria, who had escaped from prison, the two gave battle to the imperial forces at Jalapa and sustained a crushing defeat. Santa Anna, even then one with little love for forlorn hopes, started to flee to the United States, but Victoria cried, "Go put Vera Cruz in a state of defense. You can sail when they show you my head!" Guerrero and Bravo, sick of the Empire, and utterly failing to see the danger in Santa Anna, gathered some of their old insurgents about them, but met defeat in the first battle, Guerrero himself being left on the field as dead.

In none of this was there a single element of real revolution.

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Santa Anna's following was made up entirely of professional soldiers, and Guerrero had not been able to reach more than a few thousands with his message. The spirit of revolt was everywhere, to be sure, but lack of communications prevented it from taking other than local shape. Had Iturbide managed to retain the loyalty of the army, all might have gone well with him for a while, but suddenly Echevarría, captain-general of Puebla, Vera Cruz and Oaxaca, proclaimed the *Plan de Casa Mata*, calling for a "freely elected Congress vested with all sovereignty." His motive can only be assumed—personal ambitions, bribes or a dream of loot. In any event, the army followed him, and finding himself betrayed and abandoned even as he had treated Apodaca, Iturbide stepped down from the throne that he had occupied less than a year. The old Congress remained in existence long enough to punish the ex-Emperor by sending him to Italy with an annual pension of twenty-five thousand dollars, but hopefully returning to Mexico a year later, he was arrested and executed by the Liberal governor of Tamaulipas.

So ended the dream of empire. Not all of its evils perished with Agustín I, however, one in particular remaining to curse the unhappy country through generation after generation. When Iturbide had first seduced the army with money and promises, he not only taught professional soldiers the profits of faithlessness, but revealed to them their power, ushering in the reign of the Praetorian Guard.

During the period following Iturbide's flight, executive authority was vested in a triumvirate formed by Nicolas Bravo, Guadalupe Victoria, and Pedro Negrete, and out of the whirl of events, two parties sprang into being. The Federalists stood for a republican form of government, based upon the United States' model, and the Centralists urged a constitutional monarchy as more in accord with the spirit and traditions of the people. Despite every effort and expenditure by the ruling classes, they went down to defeat in the election, and when Congress convened, the Federalists held a clear majority. Proceeding swiftly, Mexico was proclaimed a sovereign republic with these states forming the federal union: Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila-Texas, Durango, Guanajuato, Mexico, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Oaxaca, Puebla, Queretaro, San Luis Potosí, Sonora,

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Sinaloa, Tabasco, Tamaulipas, Vera Cruz, Jalisco, Yucatán and Zacatecas, with Upper and Lower California, Colima, Santa Fé of New Mexico, and Tlaxcala as territories.

On October 4, 1824, was declared a constitution that divided the government into executive, legislative and judicial branches, provided for popular elections, and guaranteed free speech, a free press and free assemblage. The president and vice-president were to be elected by the state legislatures, each legislature to have the right to vote for two different candidates, the national congress to appoint as president the candidate receiving the majority of votes, and as vice-president the candidate polling the largest minority.

In the elections that followed, Guadalupe Victoria, a Federalist, was named first President of the new Republic, and Nicolas Bravo, a Centralist, was chosen to be Vice-President. Both took office on October 10, and the United States and Great Britain extended recognition at once. Only Spain and the Vatican sent ill wishes, Leo XII gloomily warning Mexico of the evil consequences of democracy, and urging the rebels to return to the rule of that great and good sovereign, Ferdinand VII, "who prefers, above all else, religion and the happiness of his subjects."

It is much the modern habit to bewail the adoption of such a constitution at such a time, on the ground that "Mexico was not ready for it"—the same hackneyed charge that figures in every phase of the human struggle. There is never any complaint that people are "not ready" for tyranny, but let democratic aspirations be released, and instantly the air fills with fears and protests. The answer is that peoples, like children, do not learn to stand alone by having others stand for them. *They learn by their falls.*

The United States in 1783, as a matter of truth, was little more "ready" than Mexico. The bitter jealousies of the colonies held back a real federal government for more than five years, and when the Constitution was finally ratified by the narrowest majority, it did not seem that union could possibly withstand the disintegrating angers that possessed each of the "sovereign commonwealths." Though they quarreled as to the proper path, all were agreed upon the goal, and there was no lawless army ready to crush the popular will as bribes or ambition dictated. Above all, a George Washington

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sat in the president's chair—as patient as he was indomitable; as far-seeing as he was resolute—and his example developed the necessary amount of political virtue to man the public service and put granite foundations under the tottering superstructure of government. But for these joined circumstances, collapse would have been inevitable.

Even without a Washington, Mexico might have made a success of her experiment in popular government, but for the intrigues of an upper class, violently unwilling to put patriotism above privilege. Hating the whole theory of democracy from the first, their one resolve was to capture the new government or else destroy it, and while a minority numerically, all *real* power was in their hands. They were massed in the City of Mexico—the seat of government—while the people were scattered, separated and isolated by mountains and desert, lacking the swift thought exchange which is the chief binder in a political union. Popular activity had been mass activity—the shocks and confusions of war—permitting little development of the individual, so that education and public business remained class possessions. Moreover, the minority had the wealth with which to bribe an army that had long since substituted greed for patriotism. With these advantages working for them, the forces of privilege set about the business of destroying the free institutions that were the hope of a nation.

## 7: The Four Curses

**A**CIRCUMSTANCE of great helpfulness to the new republic was the proclamation of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States one year before—a change in American policy that had its roots in matters intimately concerned with Mexico's hope of liberty. The Holy Alliance, formed by Russia, Austria, Prussia, and France after Napoleon's downfall, was frank in its purpose to crush the spirit of democracy that bade fair to sweep the world, and lost no time setting to work. In 1821, an Austrian army entered Italy to put down popular revolts; in 1823, French troops were sent to Spain to restore Fernando's absolutism, and bold announcement was made that the next step to be considered would be the subjugation of the rebellious Spanish colonies in South America and Mexico.

These facts crashed through the shell in which the United States had been encasing itself with such care and pains throughout the years. Monroe took counsel with Jefferson and Madison, and despite their superstitions, all three were forced to see that isolation was a dream of the past. Jefferson, forgetting his fear of "entangling alliances," the feature of his inaugural address in 1801, urged a hard and fast alliance with Great Britain for the protection of South America against European autocracy. Madison, going even further, wanted the two nations to stand together in support of free government *everywhere*, not only shielding South America, but also giving support to the Greek cause and expressing "avowed disapprobation" of the Holy Alliance itself.

Monroe, however, feared that a British alliance might tie his hands in territorial disputes, and decided upon an independent declaration, knowing full well that he could count upon England's support in any event. Never was anything less a "doctrine" than this sturdy, outright defiance that warned the absolutists of Europe to quit meddling with free governments of the Americas, this bold affirmation of democratic faith that closed the New World to the

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conquests and colonizations of the Old. As a consequence, Mexico was permitted to pay exclusive attention to her domestic problems instead of being compelled to concentrate against Spanish attack. How Juárez would have rejoiced in the opportunity! Poor Victoria, however, had none of the will and energy necessary for the correction of long-standing evils. To make matters worse, his muddy mind held fast to the delusion that peace is won through compromise, and, instead of surrounding himself with staunch Federalists, he pursued a weak policy of conciliation, naming forceful reactionaries to the highest posts.

Manuel Gómez Pedraza, Secretary of War and Navy, was a professional soldier and a thoroughgoing bigot, who both distrusted and despised democracy. Lucas Alamán, the Minister of Foreign Relations, while not less fanatical than Pedraza in his support of autocracy, was of far greater mentality, in many respects the ablest man of his period. Of a wealthy family, inheriting every prejudice of the ruling class, he had seen the wild Indians of Hidalgo kill and burn in the sack of Guanajuato, and throughout his life he thought of democracy as the reign of a mob. Sent to Europe in 1814 to complete his studies, his plastic mind received further fixed impressions by watching the work of the Holy Alliance, and when he returned in 1820, it was with the conscientious conviction that despotism was the one sensible way of dealing with people in the mass. For a full thirty years he devoted himself inflexibly to the overthrow of popular government, permitting neither honor nor humanity to stand in the way of his plans, and it is as "the man with the black brains" that he lives in the memory of Mexico.

The heavy-witted President, a pawn in the hands of this brilliant disciple of Metternich and Machiavelli, soon found himself blocking progressive legislation, and when the storm of indignation broke, he dutifully agreed that the one intelligent course was to assume "extraordinary powers." As the Federalists denounced him, naturally enough Victoria turned more and more to Alamán and the Conservatives, pathetically endeavoring to niche himself in their favor by attacking religious liberty, crushing free speech, and strenuously upholding the ecclesiastical and military *fueros* that he had sworn to destroy. With the President in his pocket, Alamán

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now proceeded to a plan which not only shaped the thought and policy of the time, but which is still revered by many Mexican politicians as a sacred tradition. Setting to work as calmly as though it had been a chess problem, he commenced the destruction of the amicable relations existing between the United States and Mexico, filling the hearts of his people with suspicion and hatred for the "Colossus of the North."

There were treason and villainy in the thing, for out of the fast forming friendship might have come an alliance rich in mutual benefits and proof against all misunderstanding. The United States had been the first to recognize Victoria's government, and Monroe searched the country for a minister who in himself would be an assurance of sympathy and enthusiasm for the new order. Joel R. Poinsett, his selection, seemed to delight the Mexicans, for the ardent South Carolinian had served in Chili and the Argentine in 1810, and from earliest manhood had been a consistent champion of Latin-American independence. Naturally enough, he found his friends among the Federalists, and as Guerrero, Gómez Farías, Zavala and other flaming democrats grouped about him, his home became a center of enthusiasm for free institutions.

Alamán's object was twofold: In the first place, the building of a wall between the two republics would prevent Mexicans from viewing the successful progress of the American experiment, thus permitting the free circulation of false reports; in the second place, misunderstanding and distrust were bound to be important factors in the prevention of revolt against the absolutism that he planned to restore. As his clear mind worked it out, a foreign war, or even the threat of one, was a sure way to stop domestic rebellion, for in the face of national peril, patriotism would cause the people to lay aside their grievances and unite in defense of country. The evil that Alamán did is past calculation, for not only was a wedge of division thrust between two friendly peoples, but he cast the Mexican mind in a mold of suspicion that endures to this very day, almost inhibiting international friendships.

Alamán did not have long to wait for his chance. John Quincy Adams, succeeding Monroe in March, 1825, at once gave Poinsett instructions to "sound out" the Mexican Government on the pur-

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chase of Texas, and followed this by instructions to make a flat offer of one million dollars. Henry Clay, his Secretary of State, wrote that ". . . the boundary which we prefer is that which, beginning at the mouth of the Rio del Norte in the sea, shall ascend that river to the Pacific." The United States had bought Louisiana from France and Florida from Spain, and the offer was in line with an open, above-board policy of purchase. At the time, Texas was a waste, the home of savage Indian tribes that constituted a standing menace to the American border, and the purpose of the acquisition was police protection rather than territorial extension. Ignoring every fact in the case, Alamán propagandized to the effect that the "Colossus of the North" was planning to steal Mexican territory —by bribes, if possible; if not, by force. In addition, Poinsett was charged with using his Masonic affiliations as a cloak for "pernicious political activity," and through the press and the legislatures of various reactionary states, he was pictured as a cunning spider weaving far-flung webs for Mexico's destruction. Even his admitted "talents, elegance, erudition, bonhomie and passionate devotion to republicanism" were denounced as details in a cunning "program of hypocrisy."

In a letter to Clay, Poinsett categorically denied every charge of improper political activity, and proved by the statements of Guerrero, Zavala and others that his sole connection with the Masonic tangle had been the procurement of a York Rite charter from the Grand Lodge of New York. The Scottish Rite, long in existence, was controlled by the Centralists, and most unscrupulously used in politics, and the Federalists decided upon the organization of the York Rite as a protest. All admitted that Poinsett, upon seeing that the new lodges were no less political than the old, had withdrawn at once. Declaring that "there is no instance on record of a foreign minister having been so persecuted in any country," the Minister asked to be recalled, but Adams and Clay upheld him in every particular, after full investigation, and protested to President Victoria against the campaign of slander.

In December, 1827, when the attack on Poinsett was at its height, the Federalists were fortunate enough to uncover plain evidence of a carefully planned revolt, and on the 20th, Congress passed a law

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expelling a large number of the Old Spaniards. The consequences were deplorable, for the deportations disintegrated business and industry, but the invincible treason of this class made the act a necessity. Forced to throw off concealment by this move against his real employers, Alamán struck at once, and the leader of the armed uprising, strangely enough, was none other than Nicolas Bravo, the Vice-President, once a true patriot and a real hero in the days of Morelos. Like so many other soldiers, Bravo was far from being a mental giant, and once brought under the influence of Alamán, his principal occupation became the swallowing of his early beliefs.

The purpose, of course, was the destruction of the Constitution and the federal form of government, but the ostensible object was to drive Poinsett out of the country. Victoria, finally seeing himself as a dupe, was still too confused to do more than wring his hands, and it was Guerrero who sprang forward and assumed charge of the government's defense, smashing the revolt before it could get in motion. Victoria weakly sent Bravo and his associates into exile, instead of having them shot, but Santa Anna, equally involved in the abortive rebellion, escaped punishment by a public confession of error that ended with the plea, "Let me dig myself an obscure grave that my ashes and memory may disappear." Up to this time, rebellion had been a hazard upon which men risked their lives, honor, and fortune, for failure meant death, instant and shameful. Now, however, with Victoria virtually pardoning the principals in a sordid, reactionary plot against the first free institutions, revolution became a game perfectly safe for any soldier of fortune to play, since no larger penalty was involved than the loss of points.

Victoria's administration rattled to its close, and the presidential campaign of 1828 developed Gómez Pedraza as the candidate of Church and Army, while the Liberals massed solidly behind Guerrero. There is no question but that every corrupt method was employed to elect Pedraza, but on the face of the returns he was plainly the victor and Congress had no other choice than to name him. A vast murmur arose from the nation and the irrepressible Santa Anna, quick to sense the situation, leaped from his "ashes" as "protector of the people," declaring for "Guerrero, constitutional government, and death to the Spaniard." Whipped, as before, he fled to Oaxaca,

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but Lorenzo de Zavala turned defeat into victory by inducing mutiny among the garrison in the City of Mexico itself. Mobs, taking advantage of the situation, pillaged the stores and homes of all foreigners, even killing, in the wild rage that Santa Anna's demagogic had excited, and after three days of anarchy, Pedraza fled to the United States, and Congress, duly reversing itself, elected Guerrero.

Now, then, was the chain of vicious precedent complete. First, the development of the Praetorian Guard through Iturbide's use of money in bribing soldiers to forswear their oaths; second, the Alaman Idea, with the creation of hatred, suspicion and distrust for all "foreigners"; third, the creation of professional revolutionists by Victoria's stupid clemency; fourth, Zavala's refusal to abide by the result of the election. However pure the motive—and Zavala's faith may not be doubted—the fact remains that he substituted force for the ballot, setting an evil example for evil men to follow. With the four curses bound to its back, the hapless republic again resumed its tottering way.

There can be no doubt of the new president's cultural deficiencies. Born in Textla in 1782 of Indian parents, a muleteer throughout his youth, Guerrero was among the first to enlist under the banner of Morelos, and thereafter his life was spent on the battlefield. Although uneducated, he was in no sense ignorant, for Poinsett bears witness to his "excellent natural talents," and not even his enemies ever denied his patriotism, courage, and incorruptible honesty. Guerrero's failures, as a matter of fact, proceeded from his virtues rather than from his faults. For one thing, he continued Victoria's policy of conciliation, mistakenly assuming that fair treatment would win the reactionaries to sincere and harmonious coöperation. For another thing, government impressed his rustic mind as a highly complicated process, calling for experienced technicians, and turning away from his own idealists, he filled important posts from the ranks of the opposition. These are errors common to every democratic movement. What the leaders of social reconstruction seem absolutely unable to grasp is that the struggle between equal justice and privilege is a fight to the death, with victory as the one possible decision. The conflict is between opposed principles, and where principles are at stake, harmony is compromise, and compromise is sur-

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renacer. As for government, its principal demand is honesty of purpose, and even if unskilled hands blunder for a while, better inefficiency than the rape of tyranny. What happened, as inevitably happens, was that the President surrounded himself with men who did not speak his language or think his thoughts; his friends were alienated and the forward movement itself was disorganized and discredited.

Weak as he proved with respect to persons, Guerrero was firm enough when it came to the fulfillment of pledges. Striking boldly at the foundations of privilege, he abolished all *fueros*, leveled laws against peonage, commenced the return of land to the people, and continued his Liberal program by a declaration of religious liberty. To check the progress of reform, Alamán again had recourse to his Great Idea, and as the Poinsett agitation had stalled, he turned to Spain. By every variety of secret assurance, Ferdinand was induced to send armed forces to Mexico, a gamble that seemed devoid of risk for the party of reaction. If the Spaniards succeeded in reconquering the country, absolutism would be restored, and even if the attempt failed, the very fact of invasion would compel Guerrero to concentrate upon defense to the abandonment of domestic reform.

The scheme collapsed through the weakness of the initial stroke, for each side of the conspiracy expected the other to furnish the strength. Ferdinand, assured that aid would be forthcoming immediately, landed less than three thousand men, and no sooner had this forlorn hope been dumped on Mexican territory than the fleet sailed back to Havana. The smallness of the force chilled the ardor of the Alamán group, and they cautiously confined their assistance to every species of sabotage that treason could suggest. Congress tied Guerrero's hands, and the "kept" press, attacking with a very fury of indecency, urged that the government be overthrown before proceeding against the enemy. The President was "a madman!" He meant to "use the army to destroy liberty!" Even as the bedeviled executive fought to free himself from a thousand entanglements, word came that Santa Anna had left his country estate in Vera Cruz and had marched against the invaders.

By this time, the Spaniards were headquartering at Tampico, which they had captured without resistance; and Santa Anna, learn-

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ing that only five hundred men had been left behind as a garrison, launched a surprise attack. Poorly planned and badly delivered—for his one idea was to reach the field of glory before any other—the assault failed miserably. The bulk of the invaders coming quickly to the rescue, Santa Anna withdrew and began a belated concentration of troops for a second attack. Fever had worked havoc among the Spaniards, and their commander offered to surrender, but rather than be cheated of a “glorious victory,” Santa Anna refused to consider capitulation. The battle raged for one whole day, and on the morning of the next the invaders laid down their arms. Hundreds of men lost their lives uselessly—but what was bloodshed, compared to winning a people’s plaudits as the “Hero of Tampico”? This was on September 11th, and the Spaniards had landed July 27th.

Hurrying to the Capital, Santa Anna entered as a Cæsar returning from mighty conquests. Guerrero, now bitterly assailed as a laggard in his country’s defense, sought to still the tumult by dismissing Poinsett and recalling Bravo and the exiled rebels, then as a climax to his weakness, finally discharged Zavala and other Federalists from his Cabinet. These concessions convinced his enemies of their power, and Alamán, in full confidence, decided upon a second revolt. Santa Anna was the logical instrument, but his capacity for treachery was aptly estimated, and choice fell on Anastasio Bustamante as a more reliable tool. This thick-headed soldier, Vice-President by Guerrero’s generosity, had helped to betray both Apodaca and Iturbide, and he advanced to his new treason with the stolid air of a conscientious craftsman. Certainly there was no lack of frankness in his pronouncement on December 4, 1829, for he explained his rebellion by stating that “the government had entirely neglected to uphold the privileges and welfare of the army, devoting its activities to the benefit of the lower classes which have never given to the country the glorious services of the soldier.”

Guerrero advanced at once to give battle, but the almost unanimous desertion of the army compelled him to flee for his life. Straightway Congress gravely deposed him on the ground of “insanity and moral incapability,” and Bustamante assumed executive power, with Alamán as Minister of Foreign Relations. All reform

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laws were annulled, the federal system abolished, and courts and Congress reduced to servility. Free speech was suppressed, and shooting, hanging, imprisonment and exile were used to bring about a proper degree of submissiveness. These measures failing to calm the prevalent unrest, Alamán brought forward his Great Idea for a second time, and solemn announcement was made that the Texas colonists were in rebellion as part of a plot to turn the whole of northern Mexico over to the United States.

Texas, at the time, was the one peaceful state in the whole of Mexico, so it was necessary to take steps to arouse revolt. On April 6, 1830, therefore, a law was passed forbidding further Anglo-American emigration into Texas and suspending colonization contracts. Later decrees built a tariff wall, and General Mier y Terán, proceeding to the frontier, inaugurated a military despotism. Local authorities were set aside, wholesale evictions ordered, all deep-water ports closed, and the colonists were turned over to the ruffianism of troops recruited from the jails of Mexico. The commander at Goliad, for instance, celebrated the commencement of his duties by putting a revolver at the head of the mayor and forcing him to hand over five thousand dollars that the municipal treasury contained. Other "generals" seized trade monopolies and levied blackmail, and citizens were disarmed and compelled to quarter soldiers in their homes. Even so, the Texans refused to rebel, their leaders counseling patience, and Alamán and the Great Idea were left dangling in mid-air.

To make Bustamante's plight even worse, the assassination of Guerrero stirred the people to new protest. After his flight from the Capital, the ex-President had found refuge in the south with Juan Álvarez, an old comrade of insurgent days, and the two were soon in command of a force of several thousand. Various victories were won, and, failing in the field, Alamán resorted to treachery. At Acapulco was a Sardinian brig under command of a Genoese named Picaluga, one of Guerrero's most ardent supporters, and this creature accepted fifty thousand dollars as the price of betrayal, inviting the President on board to dine, and seizing him as he sat at table. Taking no risk of any revival of popular affection, the prisoner was hurried to Oaxaca in irons, and, after hasty conviction on the trumpery

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charge of conspiring to sell Texas to Poinsett, was shot, on February 14, 1831.

The horror of this tragedy burned through the lethargy of the people, and Zacatecas and Guanajuato put armed citizens in the field, demanding the return of the federal system. No sooner had Bustamante crushed these uprisings than Santa Anna projected himself into the situation, "pronouncing" on a platform of free elections, free speech, and the overthrow of Centralism. Bustamante resisted stoutly, but as the army commenced to drift in Santa Anna's direction, he was finally compelled to strike a bargain that called Gómez Pedraza back from exile to serve as President until a new election could be held. This interregnum endured from December 27, 1832, to April, 1833, when the farce ended with the elevation of Santa Anna. The Liberals, however, were sufficiently powerful to name Gómez Farías as Vice-President, and also won control of the new Congress.

Only in Roman history may be found a parallel for Santa Anna, the incredible creature at last entered fully on a career that was to weigh more heavily on his unhappy land than had the Conquest or viceregal tyrannies. Born in Jalapa in 1795, and living to be seventy-seven, there was never a year of his adult life that he did not run through his country like some scrofulous streak in the blood. At thirty-eight, president of Mexico for the first time, he had already betrayed Apodaca, Iturbide, Victoria, Guerrero, and Bustamante, just as he was to betray every friendship and every cause, but never once shall we see him paying any penalty for his barefaced treacheries. Liar, thief, traitor, absolutely incapable of sustained allegiance to principles, persons or causes, and knowing patriotism only as a specious word, the least study of the man makes clear that these vices were at all times his only assets. A drug fiend, alternating purposeless activities with sodden lethargies, grotesque as an army commander, laughable as a statesman, unread and unthinking, he had no other strength than his venality, savagery and capacity for betrayal, yet for a full thirty years he dominated the life of the nation, sinking under obloquy only to rise again more powerful than before.

It is largely because of this record that the world has doubted

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Mexico's capacity for self-government, and were it proved that the responsibility for Santa Anna rested on the people themselves, the indictment would be a true one. Under analysis, however, it is plainly seen that the people never ceased to hold him in hatred and fear, and that his repeated elevations were due entirely to his hypnotic hold upon the army. No man better understood its passions and appetites, and from general to private he was adored as the great apostle of loot and license, for only at rare times did he commit the blunder of failing to make the professional-soldier class the chief beneficiary of his huge stealings. As Justo Sierra, the great Mexican historian, puts it, the army worshiped Santa Anna by reason of his ability to work the miracle of the loaves and fishes with the national budget. The Church and landed classes despised him as a fool and debauchee, and feared him as a rascal who would as soon steal from a friend as from a foe, but his hold upon the army compelled Alamán to resort to him in every crisis. The toiling millions of mountain and plain, scattered, cowed by garrisons and usually leaderless, never knew of an election until the results were announced, and their one hope lay in the few patriots who matched faith against force, and took shrewd advantage of every break in the alignment of reaction.

In the president's chair at last, finally reaping the reward of industrious treachery, Santa Anna quickly discovered that his ointment was not entirely free from flies. The Alamán group held aloof out of bitterness over Bustamante's overthrow, and there was also the fact of Gómez Farías and a Liberal Congress. With his usual subtlety, therefore, the President took a leave of absence and retired to Manga de Clavo, his country estate near Jalapa. This was to become one of his favorite tricks whenever circumstances were not to his liking, for not only did it permit drug orgies, it also gave him an opportunity to see which way the wind would blow.

Valentín Gómez Farías, left in charge, came close to being a great man. Physician, surgeon, and scholar, from the very moment of *el Grito de Dolores* he had never permitted danger, fortune, or career to curb the ardent patriotism that put him to the front in every insurgent struggle. Possessing honesty, courage and ability, he failed only in patience and in his estimates of men. The evils that crushed

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Mexico were clear to the new Vice-President, and, with a ruthlessness that beat down the suggestions of associates, as well as the resistance of the opposition, he forced legislation that abolished subsidies to the Church as well as the compulsory payment of tithings. The army was reduced to a mere shell and the national defense intrusted to a system of citizen militia; the estates for the support of the missions of Upper and Lower California were appropriated to the use of the government, and a congressional decree provided for their division into small farms for sale to the people at five per cent. of their value, all such receipts to go to road-building and irrigation projects.

Facing this legislation, Alamán and the Conservatives surrendered unconditionally, sending word to Manga de Clavo that they stood ready to make an offensive and defensive alliance, and a deal was concluded. Colonel Unda, rebelling overnight, called upon the "Hero of Tampico" to assume dictatorship, but this was much too crude for Santa Anna's melodramatic soul. Betraying every symptom of rage at the shameful suggestion, he begged the privilege of "marching against the rebels," and at the moment of contact his own troops "rebelled" under the leadership of General Mariano Arista and made him "prisoner." Now ensued another of those histrionic duels which mark every page of Mexican history, Arista "commanding" his captive to become dictator at once, and Santa Anna steadfastly refusing, but taking care to let his refusals become weaker and weaker. Just as consent was about to be wrung from him, however, Gómez Farías and Zavala crushed the revolt with citizen militia, whereupon Santa Anna "escaped" and returned to the presidency. After a few months, however, he pleaded ill health again and took another leave of absence. This time plans were made more carefully, the Church spending money without stint, and on April 24, 1834, Santa Anna marched into the City as a dictator. Gómez Farías was banished under pain of death, as he could not be caught and shot; the federal system was abolished, Congress was dissolved and all of its laws annulled. Amid *Te Deums* autocracy was restored, and the Archbishop of Mexico City officially lauded Santa Anna in these words:

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A thousand times blessed is the man [Santa Anna] who, with his firm hand, has returned to God His legitimate heritage. . . . His name will be remembered with gratitude by generations to come, and the prayer of old and young, of virgins and children, will go up to him as the elected of God. His victorious sword has come to the protection of religion and, through his true Catholicism, we have regained the peace, liberty and everlasting power of the Church. . . . We were in fear that God's mercy was denied us, but God Himself, looking upon us in kindness, compassionated our suffering. At the end of April He caused to appear on our national horizon a shining star whose beauty, gleaming in splendor, announced as in the ancient days of the Wise Men, that justice and peace were about to descend upon our land. This was the coming to this capital of our beloved, His Excellency, the President, Don Antonio López de Santa Anna, to take once again in his hands the command of our republic.<sup>1</sup>

One of Santa Anna's first acts was to accept a salary of forty thousand dollars a month from the Church, and in return, he appointed the Bishop of Michoacán as his premier.<sup>2</sup> Grospest corruption kept pace with absolutism, and a myriad of rapacities bled business, industry and agriculture to the point of death. In January, 1835, the Dictator judged it prudent to retire to Manga de Clavo, but this shop-worn trick failed utterly to curb the rising tide of revolt, and as a last resort, he resurrected the Alamán idea. Texas was declared to be in revolt, aided by the United States, and true Mexicans were exhorted to put domestic differences to one side and join in saving the fatherland from the "Colossus of the North." Inasmuch as all of this was a lie, for Texas was at peace, it behooved the Dictator to force an uprising of some kind, so in April, General Martin Perfecto Cos and a body of troops were sent across the Rio Grande with instructions to goad the colonists into rebellion.

The flourish failed of effect so far as the people of Zacatecas were concerned, for they refused to cease their demand for a return of federalism, and in May the Dictator entered this State at the head of a powerful army. An all-day battle routed the citizens, two thousand of their dead strewing the bloody field, and Santa Anna signalized the victory by turning the Capital over to fire and pil-

<sup>1</sup> *The Mexican People*, De Lara and Pinchon, p. 97.

<sup>2</sup> *Méjico á través de los Siglos*, vol. 4, p. 342.

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lage. The administration press compared the engagement to Jena, and hailed Santa Anna as "Napoleon of the Western World" and "Our Mars," but not all this shameful adulation could blind the nation to the fact of massacre. Even a majority of the reactionaries were sickened, and there was a general feeling that support should be withdrawn from this homicidal maniac.

In August, therefore, the Dictator grew more explicit with regard to Texas, issuing this proclamation: "The colonists established in Texas have shown unequivocally to what extremes they are prepared to go in their perfidy, ingratitude, and treachery. Forgetting their duty to the Supreme Government and to the nation which had so generously given them a place in her bosom, with fertile lands for cultivation, and all the natural resources necessary for their bountiful living, they have revolted against this nation under the pretext of sustaining a system, a change which has been desired by the majority of Mexicans; in this way hoping to hide their criminal ambitions to dismember the Republic."<sup>3</sup>

The Mexicans now began to believe, but Santa Anna's breathing-spell was short, for in January, 1836, disturbing news came from Texas. The diligent Cos, after stirring the colonists to revolt by a score of arbitrary acts, had been soundly whipped at San Antonio, and sent back across the Rio Grande with his tail between his legs, whereupon the Dictator called upon the Virgin of Guadalupe to bear witness that he had no other thought than his country's good, and marched off to Texas himself.

<sup>3</sup> *Colección de Leyes, Decretos y Circulares, Dublan y Maza, 1835-1840.*

## 8: The Texas Rebellion

AFLY in amber is not more lastingly embalmed than is a lie in history. As a consequence of time-honored falsehoods, it is firmly fixed in world opinion that the Texas revolt was inspired, directed, financed and fought by the United States—"the result of a deliberately calculated scheme of robbery on the part of a superior power"; a plot of "Indian killers and foul-mouthed tobacco-squirting swearers," eager to "steal from a weaker neighbor a fine slice of land suitable for slave labor." The majority of Mexican historians, ignoring years of tyranny and injustice, paint Texan life as an idyll rudely interrupted by American intrigue. The United States—greedy, ruthless, violent—is declared to have initiated the dark plot as far back as 1820, and Andrew Jackson is presented as head devil of the slave interests, crowning villainy by flooding Texas with filibusters, and supporting revolt with money and armed forces.

American historians are no less inexact, for the whole Texas question became part and parcel of the struggle between North and South, and partisan bitterness quickly substituted political buncombe for the written record. Hubert Howe Bancroft, in his *History of Mexico*, states flatly that "the Texas rebellion and secession were the result of a preconcerted plan . . . to establish a market for African slaves, in contempt of Mexican laws, and afterward to annex the new country to the United States."<sup>1</sup> Even General U. S. Grant, writing his *Memoirs* at an age when prejudice took on the color of fact, declared that "the occupation, separation and annexation [of Texas] were, from the inception of the movement to the final consummation, a conspiracy to acquire territory out of which slave states might be formed for the American Union."<sup>2</sup>

These views, and the campaign rodomontade of Adams, Clay and Webster, all translated into Spanish, naturally served to confirm

<sup>1</sup> The full story of Bancroft and his incredible literary deceptions is set forth in the appendix, pages 385-387.

<sup>2</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, vol. 1, p. 54.

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falsehood, and after nearly a century of such teaching, what wonder that there is not a man, woman or child in Mexico who does not honestly believe that Texas was torn from the mother country by force of American intrigue and arms? It is an instruction that is primarily responsible for the suspicion and distrust that stand between the two republics to-day, and as the whole of Latin-America has also heard and believed, these ancient lies do much to block the progress of amity and unity among the free peoples of the western hemisphere. The most amazing feature of it all is that the elaborate structure of falsity towers and persists without the slightest foundation in truth.

America's first knowledge of Texas came with the Louisiana Purchase in 1803, when it was supposed to figure in Napoleon's bill of sale, but Spain refused to surrender possession, and while Jefferson and succeeding presidents never abated their insistence that our title ran to the Rio Grande, Texas was too remote to create more than friction. Florida was of far greater concern, for its broad sweep cut off the United States from the Gulf of Mexico and also afforded a safe base from which Indians and Spanish and British adventurers could wage guerilla warfare upon our southern borders. When, therefore, negotiations were commenced with Spain in 1819 as a result of Ferdinand's desperate need of money, Monroe's one idea was to acquire Florida, and he threw in the claim to Texas as part of the five-million-dollar purchase price. Until the running of a more exact line, the Sabine River was accepted as a boundary.

Texas, at the time, was an arid waste roamed over by Indian tribes, its coast a haunt for pirates, outlaws and slavers, and Spain's repeated attempts to promote colonization each failed miserably, for the dangers and hardships of frontier life made small appeal to Mexicans. Eager to build a barrier between the northern states and the marauding Indians, Apodaca, viceroy at the time, agreed gladly when one Moses Austin asked for a colonization permit in 1820, and this Connecticut Yankee was given a large grant of land along the Brazos with right to bring in three hundred families. The rigors of the terrible journey between Mexico and St. Louis killed Austin, however, and his son, Stephen, inheriting the grant, faced

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the necessity of traveling to Mexico and procuring two revalidations—one from Iturbide, who overthrew Apodaca, and one from the insurgents who overthrew Iturbide.

All was adjusted at last; Austin returned to the United States, and in 1823 the colonists began to arrive, gaunt enough after the thousand-mile trip in ox-drawn wagons. Succeeding grants increased Austin's permits to twelve hundred families, and in order to strengthen the Indian barrier still more, Mexico awarded grants to Green De Witt, David G. Burnett, Ben R. Milam, and some score of others. The colonists gave whole-hearted approval to the Constitution of 1824, and Texas was joined with Coahuila as a sovereign state in the Mexican union. All of the *impresarios* were able men, but Austin was far above the average—wise, just and far-seeing—and Mexico's confidence in him grew to such an extent that he was given large military and civil powers.

The Poinsett proposal to buy Texas was, as has been pointed out, purely in the interest of larger border protection, for the feeble beginnings of the Austin colony gave little hope of sufficient growth to end the Indian raids into the United States that were becoming more frequent and more terrible. Nor was the project initiated by Andrew Jackson, as consistently alleged, for he did not become President until March 4, 1829. Poinsett's authority came from John Quincy Adams, even then a violent anti-slavery advocate, and the instructions were given by Henry Clay, twenty years later presidential candidate of the party opposed to the annexation of Texas. Nor was it an attempt to abrogate the treaty of 1819, another favorite misstatement, for Poinsett explicitly affirmed the terms of this agreement, carefully explaining that the offer to purchase Texas stood as an independent transaction. When Mexico refused to sell, Poinsett asked formal confirmation of the Spanish treaty and this agreement was reached on January 12, 1828, with the provision that the line between the two countries should be run immediately. Mexico did not ratify until 1832, even then refusing to appoint commissioners, and the revolt of Texas in 1836 found the matter just where it had been in 1825.

Andrew Jackson, inheriting the Adams negotiations, proved much more generous, for he offered five million dollars for Texas

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up to the Nueces. It is true enough that Anthony Butler, who succeeded Poinsett in 1830, turned out to be a drunken trouble-maker, winding up a hectic career by writing President Jackson that Texas could be acquired by a judicious distribution of bribes among the leaders of Mexican opinion. The proposition lives vividly in Mexican history, but there is careful suppression of Jackson's reply. The President ordered Butler's recall and sent the proposal to the Secretary of State with this biting comment written across it in his own hand: "A scamp and a liar."

None of these negotiations touched Texas, for Indian raids and the conquest of the soil absorbed all energies. The settlers heard of events in the City of Mexico without being affected by them, and it was not until 1830, when Bustamante decided to stir them to revolution, that the Texans were drawn into the political maelstrom. As has been told, the brutalities of Alamán's policy stunned rather than aroused, and their leaders had little difficulty in controlling the few hotheads. Austin, however, knew the temper of his people, and addressed to General Mier y Terán a solemn warning that would have saved Texas for Mexico had it been heeded: "I have informed you many times, and I inform you again, that it is impossible to rule Texas by a military system. . . . From the year 1821 I have maintained order and enforced the law in my colony simply by means of *civicos*, without a single soldier, and without a dollar of expense to the nation. . . . Upon this subject of military despotism I have never hesitated to express my opinion, for I consider it the source of all revolutions and of the slavery and ruin of free peoples."<sup>3</sup>

Thus matters stood—the Texans crushed under unjust laws and military oppression—until the spring of 1832, when Santa Anna "pronounced" against Bustamante and declared for the Constitution of 1824. Mier y Terán hurried away with the bulk of his troops to give battle to the rebels, and the Texans, all ardent Federalists, rose at once. The garrisons at Forts Velasco and Nacogdoches were captured without great resistance and General José Antonio Mexía, Santa Anna's military representative, was received as a deliverer and assured of loyalty to the death. By October,

<sup>3</sup> Francisco Bulnes, *Las Grandes Mentiras de Nuestra Historia*, p. 303.

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when it seemed certain that Bustamante would be overthrown, the Texans felt the time ripe to ask the remedy of their abuses, and the first elective assembly gathered in San Felipe de Austin. Memorials were prepared requesting the repeal of obnoxious provisions in the law of 1830, and there was also a petition for separate statehood. For some time, Texas had been unhappy in her union with Coahuila, for the great separating distances made common interests an impossibility. Moreover, Texas was permitted only two representatives, and in addition to odious laws, the legislature had developed the habit of voting away huge tracts of the public land of Texas.

"What," asked the memorial, "was there in all this to induce suspicion of our disloyalty to the constitution? Was it in our remaining quiet for more than two years after the passage of the law of the 6th day of April? Was it in declaring for the constitution and hazarding all we held dear in its defense? Would it not have been as easy to have taken advantage of the troubles in the interior, and to have declared and battled for independence? Was there ever a time more opportune and inviting? Why did we not then declare for independence? Because in the honest sincerity of our hearts, we assure you, and we call Almighty God to witness the truth of the assertion, we did not then, and we do not now, wish for independence. No! there is not an Anglo-American in Texas whose heart does not beat high for the prosperity of the Mexican republic."

Upon deliberation, however, it was deemed wise to postpone the petitions until the new government should have consolidated its power, and on April 1, 1833, a second assembly indorsed the action of the first, and sent Austin to the City of Mexico with the memorials. Santa Anna, no longer needing the friendship of the Texans, coldly repudiated his pledges of assistance, and finally crowned his treachery by throwing the unfortunate envoy into a dungeon, where he lay for seventeen months, part of the time in solitary confinement.

Leaderless, bewildered, confused, the lot of the colonists grew in wretchedness. Corrupt legislators raided the public lands of Texas more and more outrageously, one tract of 1,809,908 acres going for one and two-thirds cents an acre; civil war in Coahuila destroyed the last vestige of civil government; and the Indians,

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taking advantage of chaos, perpetrated massacre after massacre. These were the conditions in April, 1835, when Santa Anna turned to the Alamán Idea, and sent Cos with an army to suppress "the Texas revolution." On reaching Monclova, this Napoleonic general arrested the newly elected governor and the legislature, and even as the Texans stood stunned and wondering, an intercepted letter gave them information that Santa Anna planned the deportation of all Anglo-Texans.

In a burst of indignation, William Barret Travis and a small force compelled the surrender of the port of Anahuac on June 30, disarming and paroling the garrison. This action, more than two months after Santa Anna's announcement that Texas *had* rebelled, was quickly disavowed by the colonists, and Cos' acceptance of the apology restored the former state of indecision. This extract from a letter written by Travis to James W. Bowie on July 30 admirably depicts the state of the public mind: "The peace party, as they style themselves, I believe are the strongest and make much the most noise. Unless we can be united, had we not better be quiet and settle down for a while? Governor Cos writes me that he wants to be at peace with us; Ugartechea does the same. God knows what we are to do! I, for one, am determined to go with my countrymen; right or wrong, sink or swim, live or die, survive or perish, I am with them."<sup>4</sup>

Suddenly, either of his volition or under instructions, Cos changed from conciliation to arrogance, and ordered the arrest of Lorenzo de Zavala, Juan Zambrano, José Carbajal, and other Federalist refugees in Texas. The colonists refused to make the surrenders, for the men were respected and loved, and all knew that Cos would put his prisoners before a firing-squad, for full particulars of the massacre at Zacatecas now began to be received. Feeling ran high, but on September 1, Austin returned after an absence of two years and four months, and straightway threw his powerful influence on the side of peace. Even as he assured the Texans that Santa Anna would keep faith, Cos crossed the Rio Grande and joined Ugartechea at San Antonio, bringing word that the main army was on its way. The devil and the deep blue sea were pleasant alternatives compared

<sup>4</sup> Yoakum's *History of Texas*, p. 343.

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to those which faced the Texans, but even as they debated decision was made for them, much as Concord decided for the American colonists. Mexican troops attempted to seize a cannon belonging to the little community of Gonzales, and the citizens, rallying under a common inspiration, beat them off in a pitched battle on October 2. The die was now cast. Volunteers rushed from every quarter, armed with their deadly rifles, and when Austin came to Gonzales on October 11, the rebels voted him the supreme command. A brisk encounter at Concepcion beat back a Mexican detachment—Goliad and Lipantitlan were captured—and with grim determination a little army of five hundred marched boldly against San Antonio.

Coincident with these stirring events, a General Consultation assembled at San Felipe de Austin on November 1, and while there was unanimous agreement that tyranny should be resisted to the death, a vote of 33 to 15 rejected a declaration of independence and adopted this preamble: "Whereas General Antonio López de Santa Anna and other military chieftains have by force of arms overthrown the federal constitution of Mexico and dissolved the social compact which existed between Texas and other members of the Mexican Confederacy; now the people of Texas, availing themselves of their natural rights, solemnly declare that they have taken up arms in defense of their rights and liberties, which were threatened by the encroachment of military despots, and in defense of the republican principles of the federal constitution of 1824."<sup>5</sup>

The whole war gesture had a touch of almost dramatic gallantry, for behind Cos and his cannon loomed the menace of Santa Anna and the military resources of a nation. Every Texan, however, was frontier-forged, tested by years of warfare against Indian tribes, and now that a decision had been made, they faced danger with the same gay resolution that had enabled them to turn deserts into orchards. Henry Smith was chosen the head of the provisional gov-

<sup>5</sup> By way of painting a back-drop for the drama that is to follow, this was the population of Texas, and its distribution, on the eve of war: Nacogdoches, the Department of the East, contained 9,900 colonists, with these municipalities: Nacogdoches, 3,500; San Augustine, 2,500; Liberty, 1,000; Johnsburg, 1,000. Brazos, the Department of the Center, held 8,000 people, and its settlements were San Felipe de Austin, 2,500; Columbia, 2,100; Matagorda, 1,400; Gonzales, 900 and Mina, 1,100. Bexar, the Department of the West, had 4,000 people and these towns: Goliad, 700; Victoria, 300; San Patricio, the Irish colony, 600.

## The Texas Rebellion

ernment, and Sam Houston, by acclamation, was named commander-in-chief. Now, *for the first time*, the question of aid from the United States was brought up, and Austin, Dr. Branch Archer and William H. Wharton were accredited as commissioners to raise funds and men in the United States. As a further answer to the lies of history, every oath of office contained these words: "I do solemnly swear that I will support the republican principles of the Constitution of Mexico of 1824."

Austin, receiving news of his appointment, turned the command of the citizen army before San Antonio over to Colonel Edward Burleson, and straightway commenced a violent argument as to whether there should be siege or assault. Ben Milam, one of the original impresarios, had just escaped from Mexican captors, and his bitter anger demanded action. "Come on!" he cried, "who'll go with old Ben Milam into San Antonio!" All leaped forward at the shout, and the reckless band hit the Mexican fortifications with the force of a battering-ram. From house to house Texans fought their way, brave Milam falling with a bullet through his brain, and on the morning of December 9, after four days and nights of furious attack, Cos flew the white flag.

His surrender was as cowardly as his defense had been stupid, for his force numbered thirteen hundred, twice that of the Texans; he possessed artillery in quantity, and his battle losses were small. The conquerors were generous in the hour of victory, for the first paragraph in the articles of capitulation read as follows: "That Cos and his officers retire with arms and private property into the interior of the Republic, under parole of honor that they will not in any way oppose the reëstablishment of the federal constitution of 1824." Yet within three months this man and his soldiers were back in Texas taking part in the slaughter of the Alamo! No Mexican historian mentions this solemn parole and its violation, or the equally solemn declaration that the Texans were fighting to *stay in* the Mexican union, not to get out of it.

By December 15 not a Santa Anna soldier remained on Texas soil, and the call of home quickly disintegrated the "army of liberty." Francisco Bulnes, while losing no chance to assert that the Texas rebellion was fought by filibusters from the United States,

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nevertheless makes the naïve admission that after the taking of San Antonio, “the colonists returned to their agricultural labors, leaving a revolutionary legislative committee that sustained the revolution in favor of the Constitution of 1824, according to the will of the majority of the Texan people.”<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *Las Grandes Mentiras de Nuestra Historia*, p. 465.

## 9: "Remember the Alamo"

**R**EVOLUTIONS are not orderly processes at best, and by way of adding to the turmoil, the highly individualized lives of the Texans were without large experience in coöperation. Governor Smith and the General Council fell into bitter quarrels; Dr. James Grant, an Englishman whose rich properties in Parras had been confiscated by Santa Anna, urged an instant attack on Matamoros, insisting that a bold foray into Mexico could not possibly prove less successful than the invasion of Cortes. Captain James W. Fannin, Jr., and Colonel Frank W. Johnson, both fancying themselves as Hannibals, planned independent campaigns without the least reference to Sam Houston, the commander-in-chief, and the arrival of American volunteers added to the unrest and insubordination.

No sooner had the news of Gonzales and Goliad reached New Orleans than the ardent youth of the south leaped forward to aid in what was proclaimed as a struggle for independence. Colonel Wyatt came with eighty from Alabama; Major Ward brought one hundred and twelve from Georgia; Mississippi furnished a small number and Captain Morris led the New Orleans Grays. All had come in the expectation of action and adventure, and finding the fighting over, they milled about like restless cattle.

General Houston set out in early January with intent to organize his forces, but on reaching Refugio he was astounded to learn that the Council had deposed President Smith and given Fannin unlimited military power. To make matters still more hopeless, he learned that San Antonio was virtually without defense, Dr. Grant having finally succeeded in convincing the reckless volunteers of the wisdom of the Matamoros expedition. Only eighty men of the garrison refused to join in the mad venture, and these were stripped of munitions, supplies and even medicine for the sick and wounded. Sending William Barrett Travis and James W. Bowie to strengthen San Antonio with such men as they could gather,

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Houston himself hurried back to San Felipe de Austin to straighten out the tangle of conflicting authority. Nothing could be done, however, and the menace of an Indian uprising forced him still farther north to arrange a peace treaty with the Cherokees and ten allied tribes.

This, then, was the situation in mid-February: The Council and President in a deadlock; Fannin at Goliad with some four hundred men, and Grant and Johnson at San Patricio with another hundred, all busily engaged in preparing for the Matamoros expedition; at San Antonio, Travis and Bowie with one hundred and fifty men—as complete a dissipation of strength as insubordination ever accomplished. All the while, Santa Anna was coming from Mexico by forced marches, and even as the Texans bickered, he crossed the Rio Grande and announced a “campaign of extermination.” With six thousand men in his command it should have been easy, for seizure of the seaports would have cut off the rebels from munitions and supplies, letting him crush their scattered bands at leisure. Instead of that, he made San Antonio his one objective in order to “wipe out the shame” of Cos’s capitulation.

The garrison saw his colors on the morning of February 23, and crossed the river to the Alamo, an abandoned mission, deeming it better suited for defense. Built by the Franciscan friars in 1722, the stone walls of church and convent still stood, and hopefully mounting his fourteen pieces of artillery, Travis flew to the breeze, not the flag of the United States, not a Texan banner, but the *tricolor of the Mexican Republic*. There was ample time to have escaped, for Santa Anna made no complete investment, but all were men who looked on flight as shameful, even had it not been their conviction that San Antonio was a strategic point which must be defended to the death. In a land where bravery was accepted as a matter of course, Travis was famous for his courage; Captain James B. Bonham stood no less high in public estimation; the deadly Bowie roped and rode alligators in his lighter moods; and at their side was Davy Crockett, newly arrived from Tennessee with his fiddle and rifle.

“Send aid,” was Travis’s message to Texas, “for I shall never surrender nor retreat.” On March 1, Captain Albert Martin and thirty-

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one men marched in from Gonzalez, bringing the total strength of the defense to one hundred and eighty-two, and on March 3, the gallant Bonham returned to take his stand with those who counted themselves already dead. Fannin had promised to follow with three hundred men, but swollen streams and a shortage of food stopped his march and drove him back to Goliad.

Day after day the artillery of Santa Anna thundered; assault followed assault, and always the horns shrilled the *deguello*, a barbaric air signifying “no quarter,” and still the doomed garrison fought on. In the early dawn of March 6, after eleven days of bombardment, the Mexicans advanced in force under the gallant leadership of General Castrillón, and after three desperate attempts, carried the walls and engaged the remaining defenders in fierce hand-to-hand fighting. Well indeed was Texas entitled to cry to the world, “Thermopylæ had its messenger of defeat; the Alamo had none!” for of the defenders but five were left alive. Travis, Bonham, and Davy Crockett died bullet-riddled, and Bowie, bed-ridden from a fall, was found with bodies heaped about him. The Mexican loss was between one hundred and fifty and two hundred killed, and from three hundred to four hundred wounded.

General Castrillón and other officers, brave men themselves, begged the lives of the five survivors as well as decent burial for noble foes, but Santa Anna denied both petitions. Under his personal direction, the prisoners were shot down in cold blood and the bodies of the garrison were piled high in brushwood and burned. This done, he sent word to Mexico that the Alamo had been defended by thirty-six hundred Texans, and Secretary of State Monasterio rushed congratulations to the conqueror, saying: “You have garnished your temples with laurels of unwithering fame, and your victory will teach the sympathizers among our evil-disposed neighbors not to contest against your military genius.”

Nor was the Alamo the only disaster. General Urrea, detached from Santa Anna’s main force at Laredo, had marched by way of Goliad, and on February 27, at San Patricio, Johnson and his men were surprised, and only five escaped. On March 2, Dr. Grant and the remainder of the party were ambushed and shot down after a running fight. Ninety-seven men were in the two groups and all

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but twelve paid for their insubordination with their lives, Dr. Grant meeting death at the heels of a wild horse.

On March 1, regularly elected representatives of the people assembled in the little town of Washington, and on the 2nd, after solemn recitation of wrongs, it was declared that:

These and other grievances were patiently borne by the people of Texas until they reached the point at which forbearance ceases to be a virtue. We then took up arms in defense of the National Constitution. We appealed to our Mexican brethren for assistance; our appeal has been made in vain; although months have elapsed, no sympathetic response has yet been heard from the interior. We are therefore forced to the melancholy conclusion that the Mexican people have acquiesced in the destruction of their liberty, and the substitution therefor of a military government.

Texas was proclaimed to the world as "a free, sovereign and independent republic." David G. Burnet was elected President *ad interim*; Lorenzo de Zavala, Vice-President; and Houston was again unanimously chosen to command the army. With full authority at last, he hurried to the relief of the Alamo, but at Gonzales received the crushing news of its fall, together with word of the Grant and Johnson massacre. With only three hundred and seventy-four men to rely upon, half-armed and unprovisioned, Houston fell back to the Colorado River, and rushed couriers to Goliad, ordering Fannin to blow up the fort and retreat at once. Fannin, however, determined to play his drama to the bitter end, sent Captain King and twenty-eight Georgians to Refugio on a wild-goose chase, and, when these were attacked by Urrea, dispatched Ward and one hundred and twenty-five volunteers as a further relief. As it developed, King foolishly refused to recognize Colonel Ward's superior authority, and, charging into the wilderness at the head of forty-six men, was captured and shot, together with his entire command. Ward and one hundred and seven men, left to bear the full force of the Mexican assault, were finally compelled to retreat, but as their ammunition gave out, they surrendered to Urrea as prisoners of war.

Fannin received the news of the Refugio disaster on the 17th—

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four days after Houston's order to evacuate—but even then he did not commence to retreat until the 19th. Proceeding carelessly, as if to show his contempt for the Mexicans, the reckless captain made his first halt in a basin in the open prairie, although water and heavy timber were only half a mile ahead. Suddenly Urrea appeared in force, and, after an afternoon and night of fierce fighting, Fannin was compelled to fly the white flag, and to negotiate a surrender that pledged fair treatment and release as soon as exchanges could be effected. All were herded back to Goliad, and a few days later Ward and eighty-five Georgians were brought in.

There is every reason to believe that the Mexican commander meant to keep faith, for he sent officers to the coast to make the necessary sailing arrangements, but from Santa Anna came word to kill without mercy, and Urrea, saving his face by a hurried departure, turned the butchery over to a subordinate.<sup>1</sup> The slaughter that took place in the early morning of the 27th was far more shocking than that of the Alamo, for to the very last the prisoners were assured that the terms of surrender would be observed, and the order to assemble was looked upon as a preliminary to release. As they marched away in three separate companies, laughing and joking, the Mexican troops opened fire, shooting them down like so many sheep. When the smoke lifted, three hundred and ninety men lay dead on the prairie. An attempt to burn the bodies was only half successful, and when Houston came to the spot a month later, there were still arms and legs to bury. Some medical officers and a dozen boys concealed by the compassionate Señora Alvarez, were the only ones to escape.

The plight of the Texans was now desperate in the extreme. The American volunteers, from which so much had been hoped, were wiped out, as well as the bravest of the colonists, and the panic-stricken men left the field to hurry their families to safety. The one hope of the rebellion now lay in the incompetence of Santa

<sup>1</sup> Urrea, in his diary, absolves himself from responsibility for the “horrid transaction,” and while admitting that Fannin and his men surrendered in full faith that their lives *would* be spared, still insists that the surrender was unconditional. Dr. Shackelford, a survivor of the massacre, made answer that “On this point, as well as his denial of any capitulation, I never read a more villainous falsehood from the pen of any man.” Yoakum's *History of Texas*, pp. 518-523.

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Anna, and this, at least, was one thing in which he never disappointed. Entering Texas with the absurd belief that his army could live on the country, hundreds died of starvation before he had reached San Antonio. Still persisting in his folly, he took no steps to assure a food supply and finally plunged into the interior himself in the gay spirit of a picnic party.

Houston, hardly daring to believe in his good fortune, fell back to the Brazos, and then to the San Jacinto, drawing Santa Anna deeper and deeper into the wilderness. The people burned San Felipe de Austin before fleeing; the Mexicans burned Harrisburg; and from every quarter a fury of condemnation poured on Houston for his inactivity. As he reported, "Taunts and suggestions have been gratuitously tendered me, and I have submitted to them. What has been my situation? At Gonzales I had three hundred and seventy-four efficient men without supplies, not even powder, balls or arms; at the Colorado, seven hundred men without discipline. Two days since my effective force in camp was five hundred and twenty-three men."

What Houston realized was that a defeat meant the end of the rebellion, and he did not dare risk battle except on his own terms. Hungry, half-clothed and without shelter from the spring storms, the Texans continued their sullen retreat, every man critical and mutinous, but at last the scouts reported that the egregious Santa Anna had crossed Vince's Bridge, entering a natural *cul de sac* at the junction of Buffalo Bayou and the San Jacinto. At last was the stormy Houston able to release all the curbed fury of his passionate nature. By now he had gathered seven hundred and eighty-three men, and crossing the Bayou in rudely constructed rafts, he turned to hunt his hunter. The two forces came together on the afternoon of April 20, and after a spirited cavalry engagement, pitched their camps in anticipation of the morrow's battle.

The Texans took a strong position in a grove, while Santa Anna manifested his usual genius for stupidity by selecting a site with its front open to the prairie and its rear against the marshes. Morning came, and during the forenoon, General Cos arrived with reënforcements, bringing Santa Anna's strength up to sixteen hundred men, but still there was no sign of the attack that Houston ex-

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pected. Without a word to his officers, the grim giant resolved to take the aggressive himself, and quietly hurried his scouts away with instructions to cut down Vince's Bridge, the sole connection between Santa Anna and Fort Bend, where General Filisola sat with four thousand men.

At three o'clock Houston called his men together and told them that the time had come to strike. The one drum and fife of the ragged array struck up, "Come to the Bower I Have Shaded for You," and Deaf Smith, racing up to report the destruction of the bridge, let every Texan know that it was to be a fight to the death. What followed was not a battle but a slaughter. Terrible in their rage and hate, the lean, sinewy colonists sprang forward, splitting the air with savage shouts, "Remember the Alamo! Remember Goliad!"

Taken completely by surprise, for Santa Anna and his officers were still sleeping off a heavy noonday meal, the Mexicans tried to flee, but the marshes cut off their retreat. When the Texans had fired their rifles, they used them as clubs, and when rifles smashed to pieces, they leaped from their horses and fell to stabbing with their long knives, furious as famished tigers. Only twenty minutes passed before Colonel Juan Almonte, son of the great Morelos, had wit enough to raise the white flag, but in those bloody minutes six hundred and thirty Mexicans were killed and two hundred and eight wounded, leaving only seven hundred and thirty to surrender. The casualty list of the colonists was eight killed and twenty-seven wounded, Houston receiving a bullet that shattered his ankle.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> As an example of what Mexican children are taught, here is the manner in which one school historian dismisses the entire Texas rebellion: "Texas, taking advantage of the change of government instituted by Santa Anna, revolted against the Mexican government, proclaiming its independence and the erection of the republic of Texas, of which Mr. Samuel Houston was named president and Lorenzo de Zavala vice-president, who thus betrayed his country. Aided by volunteers from the United States, little attention was paid to the warnings of the Mexican government. The Texas campaign, in its beginning, was a triumphal march for Santa Anna, who quickly conquered the fort of the Alamo, Goliad, Coporo, Villa Gonzales, El Refugio, Guadelupe, Victoria and other points. The colonists retreated to the North American frontier and there, receiving aid from the compatriots, organized a regular army that, well directed, on the 12 of April surprised the Mexican General, who with 800 men was camped on the banks of the San Jacinto near Harrisburg." N. Leon, *Historia General de Mexico*, p. 405.

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Among the prisoners were the perfidious Cos and many officers who had joined him in giving parole, while Santa Anna himself was taken the following day as he crept across the prairie in peon dress. His first request was for the opium from his supplies, and, after swallowing five grains, he faced the wounded Houston with something of his old assurance. "You, sir," he said, using Colonel Juan Almonte as an interpreter, "can afford to be generous. You are born to no common destiny, for you have captured the Napoleon of the Western World." Proceeding, he expressed a willingness to discuss terms, but Houston curtly asked how he expected to negotiate after the Alamo. Santa Anna cited certain ancient rules of war, and Houston, while rejecting the defense as a relic of barbarism, replied: "You cannot urge the same excuse for the massacre of Goliad. They capitulated, were betrayed and massacred in cold blood." Santa Anna dramatically insisted that if they had capitulated he was not aware of it. Urrea had "deceived" him, reporting that surrender was unconditional, and he had orders from his government "to execute all taken with arms in their hands." Houston sternly dismissed this argument, saying "*You* are the government, General Santa Anna. A dictator has no superior."<sup>8</sup>

Houston ended further discussion by stating that the matter of a treaty was one for the civil power, but did assure *El Presidente* that he would be treated as a prisoner of war in order that he might observe the difference between civilized practice and savagery. Of his own accord, Santa Anna sent orders to Filisola to retire across the Rio Grande, but this worthy was already in full flight, and the messenger did not catch up with him until the crossing of the Colorado. As a matter of fact, the armistice saved Filisola and his army, for he was without supplies, and his hunger-weakened soldiers, dragging themselves across a marshy terrain, would have fallen easy victims to the rifles of the Texans. Of his own volition, Santa Anna pressed for a settlement "in the interests of amity," and on May 14 two treaties were signed, one public and the other secret, at the Dictator's own request. The first merely provided for cessation of hostilities and the retirement of enemy forces beyond the Rio Grande. In the second, Santa Anna, as President of Mexico,

<sup>8</sup> *History of Texas*, by John Henry Brown, vol. 2, p. 44.

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acknowledged the independence of Texas, accepted the Rio Grande as a boundary, and pledged himself to secure the formal ratification of these agreements upon his return to Mexico. General Filisola signed on May 26, 1836, just prior to crossing the Rio Grande, and one week later not a Mexican soldier remained in Texas.

Upon the announcement that the “assassin of the Alamo” was to go free, a fury of popular indignation burst on the heads of the government, and they were denounced on every side as traitors and bribe-takers. What was virtually a mob removed Santa Anna and his officers from the *Invincible* on the eve of sailing, and while President Burnet was able to save his life, he did not dare to press the matter of release. The voice of Houston, calling from a bed of pain, calmed the people in some degree, but only close and constant guard defeated several attempts at abduction and lynching. So great was the fear of the “illustrious captive” that he burst into tears when Houston called to see him, and the giant Texan, who had come to regard Santa Anna as utterly irresponsible, gravely records that he “patted him and consoled him as one would a frightened child.”

On September 1st a general election named Houston as first president of the new republic, and, with only a fraction of the people voting on the issue, declared a wish to be annexed to the United States. One of Houston’s first acts after taking office was to veto a resolution ordering Santa Anna’s continued imprisonment, and he followed this by pressing for the Dictator’s release as essential to the honor of the state. Even as he was making this fight, the abject creature wrote him these pleas and pledges:

Orozimbo, November 5, 1836

To His Excellency, General Sam Houston:

Through the channel of your commissioners, and by my conversation with you on the 2nd inst., I have manifested to you the importance of my visit to Washington City, to adopt the most effectual mode of terminating the Texas question and the following reasons. When the treaty of the 14th of May was entered into, it was based upon the principle that Texas should form an independent nation, and should acquire a legal existence by means of the acknowledgment of Mexico. But as that basis has been changed by the recent declaration of the

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people in Texas in favor of annexation to the United States of the North, it appears to me that, by this declaration, the question is much simplified; because, in future, it will appertain to the Cabinet at Washington to regulate this matter, and with whom Texas will not hesitate to enter into any explanations, as a definite treaty is desired. The mode of effecting this important object, without loss of time, is what I hope to attain by my conference with the Cabinet at Washington, at the same time conciliating all interests. Convinced as I am that Texas will never reunite with Mexico, I am desirous on my part to improve the advantages which may offer, and avoid the sacrifices which will occur should an imprudent attempt be made to reconquer this country, which has hitherto proved more detrimental than beneficial; consequently reducing the Texas question to this single point—the regulation of the limits between the United States, which, you are aware, may be fixed at the Nueces, the Rio Grande del Norte, or any other boundary as may be decided on at Washington. I conclude by repeating to you what I have said, both verbally and in writing, that my name, already known to the world, shall not be tarnished by any unworthy action. Gratitude is my characteristic, so you will have nothing on your part to repent. To you I owe my existence and many favors of which I am deeply impressed, and these I will endeavor to reciprocate as they so justly deserve. I have the honor to remain,

Your most obedient servant,

ANTONIO LÓPEZ DE SANTA ANNA.

And yet, in 1842, we shall see this same Santa Anna attacking the Texans as destitute of honor, declaring that the treaty was forced from him by threat of death, and that never at any time thereafter did he pledge to work for the independence of Texas, or even to recognize it if restored to power. Houston, subduing protest by a stern front, procured the release of the "illustrious captive," and sent him to Washington, with an escort, where his last act, peculiarly characteristic, was to induce one of the gentlemen to cash a draft for two thousand dollars. It was repudiated, and the Texas Congress, doubtless as a gesture, recompensed the simple-minded indorser.

## 10: Truth versus History

**I**t has been shown that the colonization of Texas was without the inspiration or aid of the United States; that the colonists, conquering every adverse condition, lived in peace and loyalty until made the football of Mexican politics; that even the harsh laws of 1830 brought no revolt; that they gave faith to Santa Anna in his fight for the restoration of a federal government, endured his treacheries for four years, declared for the Constitution even after taking arms, and only asserted independence when attacked by an "army of extermination." The record is no less clear with respect to other lies which have come to be accepted as historical facts—the "evil machinations of the slave interests"; the supply of money and men by the United States; Andrew Jackson's "scheme of annexation," and the "American army of occupation" under General E. P. Gaines.

General Grant, with customary inaccuracy, states in his *Memoirs* that the colonists "introduced slavery into the state almost from the start, though the Constitution of Mexico did not, nor does it now, sanction that institution."<sup>1</sup> John Quincy Adams, with an equal passion for misstatement, said in his famous Braintree speech that the Texas revolt was "precipitated, if not chiefly caused, by the abolition of slavery by the Mexican Government." Slavery was not abolished in Mexico until 1829, six years after the original colonization, and President Guerrero specifically exempted Texas from the operation of the law. Even Alamán, in 1830, recommended to Bustamante that the exemption should be permitted to stand. In 1833, the second Texas assembly condemned slavery, and on May 1, 1837, only a few months after his inauguration, President Houston denounced the African slave-trade as a "barbarous traffic" and the Texas minister in Washington was asked to enlist aid in sweeping the slave-trade from the Gulf.<sup>2</sup> American colonists who owned slaves in accordance with the law of the United States were allowed

<sup>1</sup> *Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant*, p. 54.

<sup>2</sup> *Texas*, by George P. Garrison, p. 215.

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to bring them in as part of their families, but other importation was forbidden under penalty of death. Also the Committee on Naval Affairs of the Texan Congress reported on "the extreme impolicy of either covertly or directly countenancing a traffic which has called forth the indignant condemnation of nearly the whole civilized world."<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, the question of slavery never figured importantly in Texas thought, for in a population of thirty thousand there were less than eleven hundred slaves.<sup>4</sup> The northern half of the state did not lend itself to negro labor, and it is to be remembered also that the colonists were not of the rich planter class, but humble people for the most part, driven to the hardships of a new land by poverty.

With regard to the charge that the rebellion was fought by "filibusters" and financed by the United States, President Jackson issued a proclamation of neutrality at once, and enforced it even when news of the Alamo aroused the whole country to a fever pitch of indignation. He refused to receive the Texas commissioners, and when Austin addressed him a piteous letter of appeal, Jackson transmitted it to the State Department with this notation on the back: "The writer does not reflect that we have a treaty with Mexico and our national faith is pledged to support it. The Texans, before they took the step to declare themselves independent, which has aroused and united all Mexico against them, ought to have pondered well—it was a rash and premature act: our neutrality must be faithfully maintained."<sup>5</sup> It is true that many volunteers went to Texas, from North as well as South, but what nation has ever been able to control the sympathies of its individuals? Americans fought under Hidalgo and Morelos, just as hundreds were to fight under the banner of Juárez, and in the army of Santa Anna were Filisola the Italian, Adrian Woll the French-Swiss, Holzinger the German, Davis Bradburn and other Americans, and Castrillón the Spaniard. It is to be marked, however, that volunteers played no vital part in the drama of Texas independence. The New Orleans Grays arrived in time to share in the capture of San Antonio, but

<sup>3</sup> Garrison, p. 217.

<sup>4</sup> Yoakum's *History of Texas*, vol. 1, p. 327.

<sup>5</sup> *Annexation of Texas*, by Justin H. Smith, p. 27.

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with the Alabamians, Georgians and Mississippians who came later, were butchered at San Patricio, Refugio and Goliad. Only Texans—*original colonists*—fought at San Jacinto. Volunteers arrived in droves *after* the victory, but the letters of Houston prove that he regarded their advent as an unmixed misfortune. There were high-minded men among them, but reckless adventurers constituted the majority, and not only was maintenance a burden but their lawlessness menaced the very permanence of the new government. It was those volunteers, cheated of the chance to fight, who clamored for Santa Anna's execution, threatening to "kick Congress out of doors," and the republic did not breathe freely until all were gone.

The very shabbiness and seeming hopelessness of the Texas revolt, however, is the best answer to the charge that the United States fomented and financed it. All that the commissioners were able to borrow was seventy thousand dollars in cash, Austin pledging his holdings for security, and up to and beyond San Jacinto, an empty treasury put continual strain upon ingenuity and resolution. "Send supplies to the wounded, the sick, the naked and the hungry, for God's sake," Houston begged day after day, and the letters of Travis are bitter recitations of the suffering caused by lack of clothes and food. It stands to reason that if the rebellion had been "Jackson's plot," and if the "Southern slave-interests" had flooded Texas with their hired bravos, money and supplies would have been furnished, and Houston would have had more than seven hundred and eighty-three ragged, ill-armed men at San Jacinto, the battle upon which hung the fate of the revolution.

Further disproof of filibustering is afforded by the records of the Texan leaders. Certainly Stephen Austin was no imported bravo, and Bulnes gives Travis this certificate of character: "Travis, most terrible of the Texan revolutionists by his audacity, his indomitable valor, his disinterest and heroic qualities that were proved in his defense of the Alamo, was no instrument of President Jackson, but actuated only by sympathy for his fellows and his passionate democracy."<sup>6</sup> Colonel James Bowie was a naturalized Mexican citizen, having married a daughter of Veramendi, Vice-Governor of Coahuila, and at the time of the uprising operated a factory in Saltillo.

<sup>6</sup> Bulnes, p. 369.

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The no less famous "Davy" Crockett had been President Jackson's open political and personal enemy, and after serving three terms in Congress from Tennessee, was defeated so overwhelmingly that he left the state to begin a new life in Texas. Dr. James Grant, the Englishman, was a naturalized Mexican, owning estates in Coahuila, and had been Secretary of State. President Burnet, a New Jersey man, had fought for South American independence under Miranda in 1808, and came to Texas as a colonist in 1826, the same year that brought the Wharton brothers, Ben Milam, and Henry Smith. The Burlesons, father and son, were pioneer settlers, and Fannin and Johnson had been in Texas for several years.

General Houston, however, is the best example of the manner in which malice can distort and defame. This remarkable personality, dominating his stormy time like some colossal figure stepped from Homer's pages, has been made to live as a drunken swash-buckler who resigned the governorship of Tennessee at Jackson's request, and sneaked into Texas as the secret agent of the "slave interests." John Quincy Adams fathered the lie, and even Bulnes repeats it approvingly, writing that "there was much surprise that a man with such a smiling future should leave the great theater of North American politics to take up life in Texas, especially as he was not a colonist and had neither agricultural nor business connections. The surprise was soon ended when Houston announced that he had come to Texas commissioned by President Jackson to raise a revolution in the territory." A more deliberate falsehood was never manufactured.

School-teacher, gallant soldier in the war of 1812, Indian agent, lawyer, Congressman—these were Houston's steps to the governorship of Tennessee in 1827. Rich, beloved, honored, no future seemed more assured, yet two years later, with reëlection a certainty, he walked out of his home empty-handed and went to Arkansas to live among his boyhood friends, the Cherokee Indians. No word ever came from the tight-locked lips, but it was generally understood that his action sprang from the discovery that his bride loved another. Naturally enough, the press gave free rein to sensational conjecture, and Houston finally wrote to the President in explicit denial of the many wild charges.

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This excerpt from Jackson's answer is ample disproof of secret collusion: "It has been communicated to me that you had the illegal enterprise in view of conquering Texas; that you had declared that you would, in less than two years, be emperor of that country by conquest. I must really have thought you deranged to have believed you had so wild a scheme in contemplation; and, particularly, when it was communicated that the physical force to be employed was the Cherokee Indians! Indeed, my dear sir, I cannot believe you have any such chimerical, visionary scheme in view. Your pledge of honor to the contrary is a sufficient guarantee that you will never engage in any enterprise injurious to your country, or that would tarnish your fame. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

For two years Houston buried himself, desiring only to be forgotten, but in 1830 he accompanied a delegation of Cherokees to Washington to protest against gross injustices. Brought once more to the attention of Jackson, he was asked to go to Texas in 1832 to report on Comanche conditions, and, this done, the President gave him no further commission of any kind. Houston's return to Nacogdoches in 1833 was due entirely to the insistence of the people, who begged him to leave the Cherokees and carve a new career in Texas.<sup>8</sup> Drunken he may have been during those bitter years of misanthropy, but from the day of his return to civilized society, he furnished an example of sobriety. Instead of plunging into the public life of Texas as an advocate of independence, Houston put himself on the side of the moderates from the first. As chairman of the committee appointed in 1833 to draft a state constitution, he wrote the clause affirming loyalty to the Constitution of 1824, and in the Consultation of November, 1835, he led the winning fight against any declaration of independence.

Boldest lie of all is the hackneyed indictment of Houston as a "fire-eating Southerner," concerned only with the extension of slavery. As has been shown, his first inaugural address denounced the African slave traffic, and during his two terms in the United States Senate—1845 to 1858—he was an uncompromising foe to slavery and disunion, furiously hated by the Southern representatives. He

<sup>7</sup> *Sam Houston*, by Alfred M. Williams, p. 41.

<sup>8</sup> Yoakum, vol. 1, p. 309.

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fought for the admission of California as a free state, led the debate against the Kansas-Nebraska bill, which opened new territories to slavery, and was defeated for reëlection in 1857 because of his anti-Southern stand. Entering the field again in 1859 as an independent candidate for governor on a Union platform, he won by sheer force of personality, and when Texas decided to align with the South in 1861, he resigned rather than take the oath of allegiance to the Confederacy. A man of many naïve theatricalisms—the red blanket he loved to wear about his shoulders and the habit of speaking of himself in the third person—but for all these surface absurdities no man of his day stood above Sam Houston in character, faith, moral courage, and devotion to high principles.

Mexicans, even more than Anglo-Texans, preached the gospel of rebellion, for Austin, Burnet, and Houston were at all times made to seem cautious by the fiery eloquence of men such as Lorenzo de Zavala, Agustín Viesca, Ramón Musquiz, Erasmo Seguín, José María González and José Antonio Navarro. Zavala, as much as any other, was the great voice that forced the colonists to see the futility of submission to a tyrant of the Santa Anna brand, and his remarkable abilities matched the weight of Austin's moderate counsel. Framer and first signer of the Constitution of 1824, president of the first Congress, Secretary of the Treasury under Guerrero, president of the Chamber of Deputies under Farías, Governor of the State of Mexico, Minister to France—soldier, scholar, statesman and author—from youth he had fought tyranny, and even as he dared death under Spanish rule, and risked life in revolting against Pedraza, so was he the first to denounce the treacheries of Santa Anna. Had he submitted tamely, making his alliance with Church and Privilege, he might have become president in time, holding illustrious place in Mexican history. Because he fled to Texas and persisted in his challenge to despotism, he lives in Mexican schoolbooks as a Benedict Arnold.

Aside from assertions of intrigue, bribe-giving and filibustering, another principal charge is that United States troops were sent into Texas at a moment when the issue hung in doubt. This “army of invasion” or “occupation,” figures largely in every Mexican history, and in many American volumes as well, despite a plain sequence

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of facts and dates. By precise treaty stipulation, the United States and Mexico assumed joint responsibility for the safety of the border, and when the Texas rebellion gave the Indian tribes a free hand, Jackson informed the Mexican minister that he proposed to exercise this authority. Due entirely to Mexico's own fault, no line had ever been run, and, while the Sabine River was named as a boundary, *two* streams poured into Sabine Lake, creating a disputed strip. A conference between Gorostiza and Secretary of State Forsyth was held on April 20, 1836, and this memorandum records the American position: "Mr. Forsyth stated to Mr. Gorostiza, that in consequence of the contest in Texas, the movements of some citizens of the United States on the Red River, and apprehended hostile intentions of the Indians in Mexico against the United States, and of the Indians within the United States against Mexico, orders would be given to General Gaines to take such a position with the troops of the United States as would enable him to preserve the territory of the United States and of Mexico from Indian outrage, and the territory of the United States from any violation by the Mexicans, Texans, or Indians, during the disturbances unfortunately existing in that quarter.

"And that the troops of the United States would be ordered to protect the commissioners and surveyors of the two Governments, whenever they should meet to execute the instructions to be prepared under the treaty of limits between the United States and the United Mexican States.

"Should the troops, in the performance of their duty, be advanced beyond the point Mexico might suppose was within the territory of the United States, the occupation of the position was not to be taken as an indication of any hostile feeling, or of a desire to establish a possession or claim not justified by the treaty of limits. The occupation would be precautionary and provisional, and would be abandoned whenever (the line being run and the true limits marked) the disturbances in that region should cease—they being the only motive for it."

San Jacinto was fought on April 21st, and no Mexican soldier remained on Texas soil, but Gorostiza continued to deluge the State Department with daily letters, all assuming that Jackson's intent

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was to seize territory in support of the Texas rebellion. Day after day, Forsyth returned courteous answer, and on April 26th made this specific reply:

"The troops of General Gaines will be employed only in protecting the interests of the United States and those of the two Powers. Whether the territory beyond the United States belongs to the Mexican Government or the newly declared Texan State, is a question into which the United States does not propose to enter. It is a territory protected by the treaty of limits between Spain and the United States, subsequently recognized by the treaty between Mexico and the United States."

Again on May 3d he said: "It is not intended to be the assertion of a right of property or possession. Whether the post occupied shall prove to be in Mexico or the United States, it will be abandoned whenever the necessity ceases by the restoration of tranquillity to that distracted neighborhood."

On May 14th, Gorostiza wrote: "The undersigned, moreover, does not think that he has given any motive for inferring, from his conduct, that he could have been so suspicious of the intentions of the American Government as to suppose that the object of General Gaines' movement was to establish any sort of right to the ground which that general was about to occupy. Indeed, how could the undersigned have entertained such an idea, after the American Government had declared the contrary to him on several occasions, officially and explicitly? And this frank and noble declaration was of itself sufficient to render him easy as to the future."

General Gaines moved from Fort Jessup to the Sabine (the eastern tributary), on May 29th, under explicit instructions not to cross the river except in case of absolute necessity, but Gorostiza continued his emotional correspondence, accepting every vagrant newspaper item as gospel truth. In July, President Burnet wrote frantically to Gaines, telling of Indian massacres, and urging him to move his headquarters to Nacogdoches (well within the disputed strip), and while the request was refused, Gaines was sufficiently impressed to send a body of dragoons. Whereupon Gorostiza cried out that Mexico's "most sacred rights, as well as its dearest and most positive interests, are now being sacrificed to the shadow of a danger hitherto

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imaginary. Mexico is outraged and ruined from motives of mere precaution." After further fulminations, and the publication of an abusive, insulting pamphlet, he demanded his passports in October, and left the country.<sup>9</sup>

The dates tell their own story: The march to the Sabine was on May 29th, *a full month after San Jacinto*, and the Sabine was not crossed until August 4th, *more than three months after Santa Anna's surrender and at a time when not one Mexican soldier remained on Texas soil*. Moreover, General Gaines withdrew the dragoons in a few weeks, order having been restored.

Had Andrew Jackson been the violent annexationist that history paints, Gorostiza's action would have given him rare opportunity. Not only was insolent severance of diplomatic relations tantamount to a declaration of war, but the majority sentiment of the United States was strongly in favor of Texas. Immediately after San Jacinto the Ohio senators urged recognition, and on June 18th, Henry Clay, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, reported that the independence of Texas should be acknowledged "whenever satisfactory information shall be received that it has in successful operation a civil government." Yet when Congress met in December, Jackson advised against recognition, and in a further message on the 21st, set forth these reasons:

"In the contest between Spain and her revolted colonists we stood aloof and waited, not only until the ability of new States to protect themselves was fully established, but until the danger of their being again subjugated had entirely passed away. Then, and not till then, were they recognized. Such was our course in regard to Mexico herself. . . . Were there nothing peculiar in the relative situation of the United States and Texas our acknowledgment of its independence at such a crisis could scarcely be regarded as consistent with that prudent reserve with which we have heretofore held ourselves bound to treat all similar questions. But there are circumstances in the relations of the two countries which require us to act on this occasion with even more than our wonted caution. Texas was once claimed as a part of our property. . . . A large part of its civilized inhabitants are emi-

<sup>9</sup> The correspondence is set forth in full in *Senate Executive Document*, No. 160, 24th Congress, 2nd Session.

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grants from the United States . . . more than all, it is known that the people of that country have instituted the same form of government with our own, and have since the close of your last session openly resolved, on the acknowledgment by us of their independence, to seek admission into the Union as one of the Federal States. This last circumstance is a matter of popular delicacy, and forces upon us considerations of the gravest character. The title of Texas to the territory she claims is identified with her independence. She asks us to acknowledge that title to the territory with an avowed design to treat immediately of its transfer to the United States. It becomes us to beware of a too early movement, as it might subject us, however unjustly, to the imputation of seeking to establish the claim of our neighbors to a territory with a view to its subsequent acquisition by ourselves. Prudence, therefore, seems to dictate that we should still stand aloof and maintain our present attitude, if not until Mexico itself or one of the great foreign powers shall recognize the independence of the new Government, at least until the lapse of time or the course of events shall have proved beyond cavil or dispute the ability of the people of the country to maintain their separate sovereignty and to uphold the Government constituted by them."

As a consequence, the resolution was rejected by a vote of 23 to 19, six yeas from the North, and four negatives from the South. In the early months of 1837, however, the question came before the Senate again, and as Jackson offered no protest, recognition was extended on March 3. The President's change of position proceeded from two causes: first, the report that Texas was bargaining with England; and second, the personal assurances of Santa Anna, in Washington at the time, that Mexico did not mean to attempt reconquest, as she could not hold Texas even if successful, and that recognition by the United States would make his own task easier.

In August, 1837, the United States received formal expression of Texas' desire to be annexed, and after debates that developed the intense bitterness between North and South, the request was rejected by a Senate vote of 24 to 14. Angry and chagrined, the Texans withdrew the offer, and turned away to pursue their own destiny. Great Britain, France, Belgium, and Holland extended recognition, and Texas took her place among the nations of the world as a full-fledged republic with a president, cabinet, congress, diplomatic

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corps, army and navy. England and France, eager for control of the Texas cottonfields, were continually urging offensive and defensive alliances, and their agents filled the new republic, all preaching the advantages of such treaties. Coahuila, Tamaulipas and other North Mexican states were sending emissaries to propose a Rio Grande Confederacy, and the Texans, naturally enough, thrilled to a dream of vast expansion, wealth and power. As a consequence, Mirabeau Lamar, succeeding Houston, was elected on an anti-annexation platform, and his inaugural contained these words: "I have never been able myself to perceive the policy of the desired connection, nor discover in it any advantage, either civil, political or commercial, which could possibly result to Texas."

Never were there facts that stood clearer. The colonization of Texas was initiated by a Spanish viceroy, approved by Iturbide, and again by Victoria and the Congress of the new republic. Suddenly and unreasonably oppressed by Bustamante, the colonists refused to revolt, and when they did take up arms in 1832, it was in support of Santa Anna's revolution against Centralism, their avowed purpose being the restoration of the Constitution of 1824. Not until November 2, 1835, was the first shot of rebellion fired, yet Santa Anna announced an uprising in April, and his circular, declaring Texas in a state of open revolt, was dated August 31st. Even as late as November 7th, the Consultation defeated a proposal to proclaim independence, and it was not until March 2, 1836, when Santa Anna was storming the Alamo, that the Texans stood for final and complete separation from the Mexican union. They waged their fight without decisive aid from the United States, and won only by virtue of the persistent and incredible stupidity of Santa Anna. Jackson's refusal to extend recognition to the new republic, and Houston's attitude toward slavery and secession, join to answer the lie that the extension of slave territory was at the bottom of the rebellion. Overwhelming evidence points to the truth that the colonists were at all times willing to remain an integral part of the Mexican Union under just conditions, and were driven to revolt in defense of life and liberty. Here and there in the histories of Mexico are explicit admissions of these facts.

"I say it again," says Bulnes, "the great majority of the Texas

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colonists were willing to accept Mexican rule, even the hated Centralism, so long as it was unaccompanied by military ruffianism. . . . The truth is that we owe the loss of Texas to the militarism imposed upon the colonists by Lucas Alamán, after 1830, and . . . personified in the vices, ambition, corruption and degradation of its idol, General Santa Anna.”<sup>10</sup> Suárez Navarro bears witness that “the Texas question had its origin in the government of Vice-President Bustamante, and his cabinet will appear before future generations bearing the responsibility of having given cause for the uprising of the territory. The monstrous law instigated by that government destroyed peace.” Even Justo Sierra admits that “When Mexico broke the federal compact, Texas had the right to secede.”<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *Las Grandes Mentiras*, p. 651.

<sup>11</sup> *Justo Sierra, Juárez; Su Obra y Su Tiempo*, p. 5.

## II: Six Years of Santa Anna

THE news of San Jacinto came as a shock to the people of Mexico, for Santa Anna had been reporting the campaign as a triumphal progress, with every skirmish a victorious battle against overwhelming odds. First, General Miguel Barragán had governed in the Dictator's absence, but he died shortly, and José Justo Corro took the presidential office. As he proved both weak and timorous, the Old Order took advantage of the Texas *débâcle* to institute a complete change of government, wiping out state legislatures, and creating a Supreme Conservative Power consisting of five generals and bishops. Naturally enough, such an autocracy needed the Texas war and insisted upon its continuance. The people were told that "our brave troops" had been conquered by uniformed soldiers of the United States, that President Jackson was preparing to invade Mexico by land and sea, and bombastic proclamations announced that new armies were on the way to reclaim Mexican soil from the "accursed Yankees."<sup>1</sup> Ratification of Santa Anna's pledges was refused, Filisola was removed as a coward and traitor, and Urrea promoted to chief command, but beyond these flourishes nothing was done, for every cent spent in recovering Texas meant that much less to steal. An empty Treasury was paraded as an excuse for failure, but at the time, the army's annual budget was fourteen million dollars, almost twice the amount spent by the United States on both army and navy.

The tyrannies of the Supreme Conservative Power aroused such popular indignation by 1837 that the reactionaries deemed it prudent to announce a presidential election—a gesture which seemed safe inasmuch as all Liberal leaders were either in jail or exiled. Bustamante was jerked back from banishment to serve as the clerical candidate, and Santa Anna, landing at Vera Cruz, had the impudence to offer himself as the "champion of the people's rights." Nothing is more illustrative of the depths to which the country had been

<sup>1</sup> Bulnes, *Las Grandes Mentiras*, p. 635.

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dragged—the utter atrophy of public spirit—than the nation's acceptance of these candidacies. Bustamante was sufficient offense, but Santa Anna's return to public life carried shame with it. Yet no memories of his cruel dictatorship were invoked, no resentment manifested because of the Texas campaign, with its incompetencies, cowardice and treachery, and though he was defeated in the election, no hand was outstretched to bar him from the comforts of *Manga de Clavo*.

Bustamante, winning easily in a farcical election, continued the policies of the Supreme Conservative Power, filling the jails with Liberals and imposing still heavier taxes and even more tyrannous laws. The corruption and inefficiency of the administration reached a climax in October, when it developed that civil employees had not been paid for six months. The Cabinet resigned in a body, even their calloused gullets unable to swallow the state of affairs, and the portfolios went begging. Gómez Farías, boldly returning from exile, furnished the Liberal leadership that had been lacking, and Bustamante, as usual, fell back upon the Alámán Idea. Texas had to be put to one side for the moment, as none of the generals had any relish for the long, hard marches; the United States was equally out of the question, as such a war would necessarily have to be one of offense, and so the choice fell on France.

Here again, as in the case of Texas, we have the spectacle of a people's patriotism played upon by unscrupulous leaders—a nation tricked into war, induced to shed the blood of its youth for no larger purpose than to prolong the power of scoundrels in office. For ten years France had been asking the consideration of a mass of damage claims arising from injuries suffered by French citizens, only to be ignored and evaded. Now, suddenly, Bustamante changed the policy of evasion to one of open insult, and the French minister, long exasperated, put patience away and presented an ultimatum on March 21, 1838. The claims that he recited arose from the pillage and destruction of the property of French citizens by government troops as well as by rebel bands—forced loans, confiscation, and many instances of barbarous murder during anti-foreign riots—and the amounts totaled six hundred thousand dollars.

There was no insistence that all were just. What the French gov-

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ernment demanded was consideration only, and it proposed a mixed commission with judicial powers. Such a tribunal offered no insult to pride, and insured fairness, but Bustamante chose to resent it with dramatic pomposity. Moreover, a caterer's claim was carefully detached from the mass, and the people were asked to believe that the entire French contention had no larger base than the damage done to a cook-shop. Even to-day, Mexican history deals with the occurrence as the "Pastry War," and views it as a brutal manifestation of French greed. A blockade of Vera Cruz, instituted on April 16th, endured until November, during which time Guillermo Prieto inspired the nation with "hymns of hate" such as this:

Mexicans! Take up the sword!  
The cannon already thunders on our shore.  
Eternal hate to the haughty French!  
Take revenge or die with honor.

The vile mud of horrible ignominy  
Stains our country's face.  
Where is he, the insolent!  
Mexicans! Drink his blood.

Break the womb of the French,  
Where coward infamy shelters,  
Tear down the enemy's flag,  
And set our foot on his arms.<sup>2</sup>

By November, however, the chilling influence of the blockade forced Bustamante to step down from his high horse. It was only a momentary descent, however, for he soon found that he had succeeded only too well in convincing the people of the utter injustice of the French claims. Popular clamor forced a cessation of negotiations, and after having another offer of arbitration refused, the French declared a state of war and on November 28th commenced the bombardment of San Juan Ulúa, the island fortress that guards Vera Cruz. Throughout the afternoon the French guns kept up a ceaseless fire, but about the only real damage inflicted was upon the

<sup>2</sup> *Las Grandes Mentiras*, p. 727.

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nerves of Gaona, the Mexican commander. In the late evening he sent to General Rincón, in charge on shore, and asked instructions as to surrender. At this moment, with the delightful inconsequentiality of a Jack-in-the-box, Santa Anna appeared upon the scene, having hurried from Manga de Clavo to put his sword at his country's service. Stupidly enough, Rincón commissioned this master mountebank to inspect San Juan Ulúa, and Santa Anna, after due conference with Gaona, reported that the fortress was *indefensible*. The capitulation on the following day revealed facts that should have sent Santa Anna and Gaona before a firing-squad. The French admiral, reporting to his government, stated that the defense had lost only sixty-four men out of a garrison of 1,184; that he found one hundred and thirty-three mounted guns, ample munitions and supplies, and finally, that his own artillery fire had not appreciably damaged the walls or opened a way for assault. It was, in every respect, a shameful surrender, and no less an authority than the Duke of Wellington so branded it.

Rincón, however, was made the scapegoat, and none other than Santa Anna was placed in command at Vera Cruz. General Arista and one thousand men came puffing up well after the capitulation, and with much bustle and circumstance the "Napoleon of the West" commenced to prepare for a siege. Admiral Baudin, dominating the city with his guns, threatened bombardment unless the nonsense stopped. Unwilling, however, to resort to this stern measure, with its doom to innocent civilians, he sent three divisions ashore at night, and captured Arista and his staff, Santa Anna managing to escape in his night-clothes. Every object accomplished, the French returned to their boats, whereupon Santa Anna rallied some soldiers and dashed madly in pursuit. A rifle volley halted the chase and a wild bullet struck "Napoleon" in the leg, necessitating amputation at the knee. Of course Baudin held San Juan Ulúa, and his guns had Vera Cruz at their mercy, but this small consideration did not prevent Santa Anna from announcing that he had "driven the invaders back into the sea." From his bed he issued an address to the people which closed with this truly delicious burst of bombast: "Probably this will be the last victory I shall give my country. I die happy that the Divine Providence has permitted me to

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devote to her every drop of my blood. . . . May all my fellow citizens, forgiving my political errors, concede to me the one title that I would leave my children, that of a good Mexican."

As far as Bustamante and the Centralists were concerned, the "war" proved a boomerang. Peace had to be made with France, as a matter of course, for the full six hundred thousand dollars, and what was worse, Santa Anna had been restored to public admiration. No one would have believed them had they dared to tell the truth about the capitulation, and, caught in a web of their own weaving, they solemnly denounced Rincón, awarded medals to Gaona and his officers for a heroic defense, and sadly admitted that Santa Anna had saved Mexico's honor. Moreover, revolution had not been stilled in any degree, for Generals Urrea and Mejía "pronounced" in Tampico, and when the forlorn President took the field in March, 1839, public opinion forced him to appoint Santa Anna as his substitute. Such was the effect of a lost leg on a drama-loving people. Nor was it the end of Santa Anna's amazing luck, for Bustamante reached Tampico only to find that the rebels had fled the region and were attacking Puebla. Santa Anna, sending General Valencia in advance to do the fighting, arrived in time to claim the victory, also to order the execution of General Mejía, his closest friend and chief military supporter in the revolution of 1832. This done, he awarded himself additional laurel wreaths, and, by way of showing his invincible modesty, returned to Manga de Clavo, turning the presidency over to the ever-ready Nicolás Bravo. Six days later Bustamante hustled back, and resumed the executive office with high hope of a much-needed rest.

Popular discontent increased, however, and on July 15, 1840, General Urrea crept into the city, released Gómez Farías from prison, and the two led a barefooted following in a midnight assault on the palace. They had the luck to capture the President himself, and after a week of theatrical cannonading which killed only innocent bystanders, poor Bustamante entered into a solemn agreement to restore the Constitution of 1824. The Supreme Conservative Power was denounced, and he even went so far as to voice Gómez Farías' suggestion that the Church should give over some of its millions to aid in the alleviation of popular misery. Ecclesiastical

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and military extortion—both Church and army operating under the *fueros* that exempted them from civil and criminal penalties—had bankrupted government and private enterprise alike, and wretchedness, like some vast miasma, enveloped the people, giving the quality of hopelessness to their despair. Like sleepers caught in the grip of a nightmare, they gaped helplessly at the rise and fall of presidents, and the treacheries of politicians and the army.

A monarchy had always been Alamán's idea, and the utter collapse of Bustamante made him feel that the proper moment had arrived. By way of testing public opinion, José María Gutiérrez Estrada, Alamán's intimate, published an open letter demanding that a foreign prince be called to the Mexican throne.<sup>3</sup> A certain amount of indignation manifested itself, but as it was largely vocal, Alamán felt emboldened to go forward with his plans. Gutiérrez Estrada was sent to Europe, and in August, 1841, the rebellion was started by General Juan Mariano Paredes, a clerical tool and open monarchist then commanding in Jalisco. General Valencia, in the City of Mexico, followed suit, but the plans were somewhat upset by Santa Anna, who started a revolt of his own from Manga de Clavo, not intending to be left out of the scramble. Bustamante's one advantage was the scattered condition of the rebel forces, yet he surrendered this advantage by summoning Santa Anna, Paredes, and Valencia to a conference in Tacubaya, a virtual concentration at the very gates of the City. Realizing his blunder too late, the President suddenly proclaimed the restoration of the federal system, and when this gesture fell flat, fled the City and sailed for Europe. Santa Anna, more nimble-witted than the others, took possession and blandly proclaimed himself dictator, swearing purity and patriotism before the high altar of the Cathedral, an archbishop holding the jeweled crucifix.

As corrupt as ever, he now seemed lost to all decency and caution—looting the Treasury, levying forced loans, even gutting private banks—putting the subservient Bravo in his place whenever he felt the call of Manga de Clavo. All contracts for army supplies were made by him privately, a rich source of revenue; he put his lackey, Tornel, at the head of the College of Mines, the country's one

<sup>3</sup> De Lara and Pinchon, p. 129.

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scientific institution; thought nothing of giving twenty-five thousand dollar headdresses to his favorites; and cockfights were state functions, the entire administration being present when the master of ceremonies sonorously intoned, "Hail, most pure Mary, the cocks come." Indians were captured and brought to the City in chains so that there might be at least one private to every officer, and when the supply ran short, criminals were recruited from the jails. As the people gained courage to mutter, Santa Anna had recourse to the Alamán Idea, a battered, threadbare expedient by now, but the best his addled mind could hit upon. A conflict with the United States, France, or England presented difficulties, and Russia was too remote, so the recovery of Texas was decided upon.

As never before, he ascended heights of bombast, declaring that "the honor of the Mexican nation demands the reclamation of Texas from thieves and usurpers," and, "if it were an unproductive desert, useless, sterile, yielding nothing desirable and abounding only in thorns to wound the feet of the traveler, I would not permit it to exist as an independent government in derision of our national character, our hearths and our individuality." The treaty of San Jacinto did not bother him, nor does it seem to have bothered any Mexican historian. Gaily breaking his pledged word, therefore, he sent a raiding party of seven hundred across the Rio Grande in March, 1842. San Antonio, seventy miles from the nearest settlement, was taken without resistance, but the raiders withdrew instantly before the approach of armed forces. Again, in September, General Woll and fifteen hundred men captured San Antonio by a surprise attack, but retreated even more rapidly than they came.

In the meantime, the level-headed Houston had been elected president of Texas for a second time, in succession to the fiery Lamar, and when his Congress authorized an army of reprisal, Houston vetoed the bill. Better than any one, he knew that the Mexican raids were merely gestures, and because he hoped for peace and Mexico's recognition of Texas' independence, he had no intention of adding to bitterness by any invasion. Moreover, he ended President Lamar's alliance with rebellious Yucatan, and refused to give countenance to the Republic of the Rio Grande, formed by Coahuila, Durango, and Tamaulipas.

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Failing in his effort to provoke the Texans, Santa Anna now called upon the services of Bocanegra, his Minister of Foreign Relations. In 1841, a Texas expedition had set out for New Mexico, avowedly with the purpose of opening trade relations, but secretly designed to sound out the people on the subject of becoming part of Texas. Armijo, sole ruler of the province, had been a gambler and cattle thief, and it was generally believed that his wretched subjects would leap at the chance of rescue from his brutal tyrannies. The whole affair was entirely Lamar's own private venture, for Congress specifically refused approval, and that there was no thought of war stands proved by the fact that among the two hundred and seventy men were some fifty citizens of the United States—traders, scientists and newspaper men.

Without guides or provisions, the little company soon found itself lost and starving on the desert, and split up into small foraging parties. Armijo, advancing, captured various detachments without firing a shot, and finally secured the surrender of the main body by a peculiarly characteristic piece of treachery. All of the wretched adventurers were then sent in chains to Mexico, driven like beasts and shot down when their swollen feet gave way. Such as protested had their ears cut off, and wolves, following the doomed procession, fed fat.

After the Mexican raids and Houston's refusal to mobilize an army of reprisal, some three hundred Texans crossed the Rio Grande and gave desperate battle to General Pedro Ampudia at the town of Mier. They finally surrendered under pledge of exchange, but not only did Ampudia send them in irons to the City of Mexico when some attempted to escape, Santa Anna sent orders for all of the prisoners to be shot. The protests of Mexican officers resulted in the change of the order to "one in ten," and black beans, mixed in a jar with white, selected the unfortunates.

These tragedies excited widespread indignation in the United States, and in many cities mass meetings voiced American protest. These meetings, together with the sale of war supplies to Texas—furnished the grounds for Bocanegra's attack. As an opening gun, he published a circular indicting the United States for breach of neutrality, treachery, and intrigue, and in May, 1842, addressed a

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letter to President Tyler, first giving it to the press, charging "conduct openly at variance with the most sacred principles of the law of nations and the solemn compacts of amity existing between the two countries"; with the threat that continuance of the course would be held as "a positive act of hostility." The correspondence that followed is important mainly because of its precise definition of the attitude of the United States toward Mexico, and because the American replies were written by Daniel Webster, who, four years later, was to swallow his words and become the bitterest critic of Polk's Mexican policy. In his letter, Secretary of State Webster flatly denied broken neutrality or breaches of faith, and laid down these declarations of policy:

Mexico may have chosen to consider, and may still choose to consider, Texas as having been at all times since 1836, and as still continuing, a rebellious province; but the world has been obliged to take a very different view of the matter. From the time of the battle of San Jacinto, in April, 1836, to the present moment, Texas has exhibited the same external signs of national independence as Mexico herself, and with quite as much stability of government. Practically free and independent, acknowledged as a political sovereignty by the principal powers of the world, no hostile foot finding rest within the territory for six or seven years, and Mexico herself refraining for all that period from any further attempt to reëstablish her own authority over that territory, it cannot but be surprising to find Mr. de Bocanegra complaining that for that whole period citizens of the United States or its Government have been favoring the rebels of Texas and supplying them with vessels, ammunition and money, as if the war for the reduction of the Province of Texas has been constantly prosecuted by Mexico, and her success prevented by these influences from abroad. . . .

Since 1837 the United States have regarded Texas as an independent sovereignty as much as Mexico, and trade and commerce with citizens of a government at war with Mexico cannot on that account be regarded as an intercourse by which assistance and succor are given to Mexican rebels. The whole current of Mr. de Bocanegra's remarks runs in the same direction, as if the independence of Texas had not been acknowledged. It has been acknowledged; it was acknowledged

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in 1837 against the remonstrance and protest of Mexico, and most of the acts of any importance of which Mr. de Bocanegra complains flow necessarily from that recognition. He speaks of Texas as still being "an integral part of the territory of the Mexican Republic," but he cannot but understand that the United States do not so regard it. The real complaint of Mexico, therefore, is in substance neither more nor less than a complaint against the recognition of Texan independence. It may be thought rather late to repeat that complaint, and not quite just to confine it to the United States to the exemption of England, France and Belgium, unless the United States, having been the first to acknowledge the independence of Mexico herself, are to be blamed for setting an example for the recognition of Texas. . . . The Constitution, public treaties, and the laws oblige the President to regard Texas as an independent state, and its territory as no part of the territory of Mexico.<sup>4</sup>

Whereupon the whole matter ended as suddenly as it had begun, and Santa Anna, cut off from this hope, gave himself over to witness gyrations without any seeming point. Congress was dissolved, eighty "Notables," under the turncoat, Nicolas Bravo, framed a new constitution, and a farcical election changed the Dictator into a president. Opium and debauchery, working on a mind never stable at best, produced a species of madness, and not content with looting the public Treasury, selling the government's tobacco monopoly and a third interest in a great mine which paid the government fifty thousand dollars a year, he blackmailed individuals, filled the prisons with his enemies, and as a final fling at public opinion, left the funeral services of his wife to marry a fifteen-year-old girl. During the Manga de Clavo absences of this period, General Valentín Canalizo filled the presidency, one of Guerrero's assassins whose cultural development is attested by this illuminative incident. His wife happening to die, Canalizo had the body carefully embalmed, after which glass eyes were inserted, and then the finished product was put on public view, the weeping husband ever near to point out such items of the undertaker's art as the public overlooked.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Webster to Minister Thompson, *House Executive Document*, No. 266, 2d Session, 27th Congress.

<sup>5</sup> Waddy Thompson's *Recollections of Mexico*.

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In June, 1843, under pressure from Great Britain, Santa Anna entered into a truce with Texas with the avowed purpose of settling every disputed question, but the armistice he finally offered in January, 1844, referred to Texas as a "department of Mexico." As a matter of course, Houston gave it no attention, and turned to the United States, President Tyler having resumed annexation discussions. An annexation treaty was signed on April 12th, but the Senate of the United States, after weeks of bitter debate, rejected it on June 8th by a vote of 35 to 16. Ignoring this action of the United States Senate, and foolishly rejecting a secret proposition from England and France that would have prevented annexation and guaranteed Mexico's boundaries, Santa Anna screamed for men and money with which to save his beloved country from the "Colossus of the North." Every defile of Mexico's mountains was to be a Thermopylæ, but after raising four million pesos, the incredible creature devoted the entire amount to his prodigalities, spending nothing on arms and munitions.

In September he asked for another ten millions, and threatened to rob the coffers of the Church, whereupon the signal for revolt was given, and on November 1st the ever-obliging General Paredes led his command against "unbearable tyranny." The Dictator, dissolving Congress, marched off against the rebels, but the army, figuring him as a dead cock-in-the-pit, calmly deserted. Despairingly, bombastically, Santa Anna declared for the federal system, but only derision was his answer. Defeated at Puebla, he started to return to the Capital, only to hear that a mob had taken the Sacred Leg from its tomb and were dragging it through the streets. Falling into panic, and fearing even his bodyguard, he slipped from camp at night, and in January, 1845, was captured by peasants. Always able to win mercy, although never giving it, the fallen idol was permitted to go into exile, and left for Havana with a final outburst of buncombe about honor and country.

## 12: The Annexation of Texas

**J**OHN TYLER, succeeding to the presidency of the United States on the death of William Henry Harrison in April, 1841, soon found himself a man without a party. A "bolter" from the Democratic ranks, and nominated and elected by the Whigs, the very first acts of his administration enraged the Whigs, while the Democrats continued to hate him for his desertion. Looking about for some short-cut to popularity, certain circumstances called Texas to his attention, and he decided to revive the annexation project.

During the years when the United States ignored the Lone Star republic, Texas had been turning more and more to France and England for friendship and support. England, seeking control of Texas cotton production, also a monopoly of the Gulf-carrying trade, showered favors upon the young government, and as a trump card, promised to force Mexico to recognize the independence of Texas. When Santa Anna consented to the truce of 1843, therefore, it looked as if English diplomacy had won the battle, and that Texas was forever lost to the United States.

These were the happenings that excited Tyler, and with quick decision he sent a note to Texas suggesting the resumption of the seven-year-old discussion. Houston ignored the communication, and when Secretary of State Upshur wrote again, the reply was cold and non-committal. But now Tyler was convinced that Great Britain's activities constituted a threat against the Monroe Doctrine, and in January, 1844, Upshur wrote a third note, delivering a virtual ultimatum with regard to annexation.

As Santa Anna broke off the truce just at this time, Houston did not dare treat the letter as he had treated the September and October communications, but his answer was adroit to the point of diplomatic genius. First, he said, Congress should *authorize* President Tyler to proceed in the matter of annexation, and second, to guard against dangerous consequences, Texas must receive assurances, or

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guarantees, of its independence by the United States in event of a second rejection. Houston knew well that it was not within the President's power to give such guarantees, and it was clearly his purpose to put Tyler in a position where he could have no just complaint when Texas turned to Europe for aid. So sure was he of success that he urged England to resume discussions with Santa Anna, promising to bind his country to refuse all offers of annexation if Mexico would conclude a peace.<sup>1</sup> Upshur, however, was killed in an accident, and Calhoun, who succeeded him, was as plausible as he was imperious. The Texas representatives were not only persuaded to sign a treaty, but Calhoun actually induced them to accept his own personal assurances of protection in lieu of the guarantee that Houston had ordered. Moving quickly, for it seemed a case of "now or never," Tyler submitted the treaty to the Senate on April 22, 1844, with these supporting reasons:

The question narrowed down to the simple proposition whether the United States should accept the boon of annexation upon fair and even liberal terms, or, by refusing to do so, force Texas to seek refuge in the arms of some other power, either through a treaty of alliance, offensive and defensive, or the adoption of some other expedient which might virtually make her tributary to such power and dependent upon it for all future time. Texas would undoubtedly be unable for many years to come, if at any time, to resist unaided and alone the military power of the United States; but it is not extravagant to suppose that nations reaping a rich harvest from her trade, secured to them by advantageous treaties, would be induced to take part with her in any conflict with us, from the strongest consideration of public policy.

The hazard of now defeating her wishes may be one of the most fatal tendency. It might lead, and most probably would, to such an entire alienation of sentiment and feeling as would inevitably induce her to look elsewhere for aid, and force her either to enter into dangerous alliances with other nations, who, looking with more wisdom to their own interests, would, it is fairly to be presumed, readily adopt such expedients; or she would hold out the proffer of discriminating duties in trade and commerce in order to secure the necessary assistance. Texas voluntarily steps forth, upon terms of perfect honor and good faith to all nations, to ask to be annexed to the Union. As an independent sov-

<sup>1</sup> Smith's *Annexation of Texas*, p. 391.

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ereignty her right to do this is unquestionable. In doing so she gives no cause of umbrage to any other power; her people desire it, and there is no slavish transfer of her sovereignty and independence. She has for eight years maintained her independence against all efforts to subdue her. She has been recognized as independent by many of the most prominent of the family of nations, and that recognition, so far as they are concerned, places her in a position, without giving any just cause of umbrage to them, to surrender her sovereignty of her own will and pleasure.

All signs pointed to a fairly non-partisan consideration of the matter. While Texas, by virtue of slavery's existence, promised strength to the South, New England had come to a keen realization of the value of the Texas markets, and there was also the strong anti-British sentiment of the country to count upon. Moreover, all the various political leaders seemed safely committed to the proposition by their records. Ex-President John Quincy Adams, now Whig spokesman in the House, had instituted the negotiations to buy Texas in 1825, and Henry Clay, as his Secretary of State, had pressed the negotiations with full enthusiasm. Daniel Webster, the other great captain of the Whigs, was on record with the Bocanegra letters in which he had upheld and approved the absolute sovereignty of Texas, while ex-President Martin Van Buren, seemingly in full control of the Democratic organization, had also favored the acquisition of Texas by purchase when he was Jackson's Secretary of State.

In Tyler's action, however, all saw a determined bid for the Democratic presidential nomination, and as offices are not won by non-partisanship, the other candidates quickly took stock of Texas as a campaign issue. The subtle Webster figured that Clay, his rival for the Whig nomination, would have to favor annexation by reason of his Southern support, and with an eye to the Northern Whigs, swallowed the Bocanegra correspondence at a gulp, and declared against annexation. Clay, however, had just finished a tour of the South, and his observations led him to believe that Southern interest in annexation had been exaggerated. The planting interests, he found, were disposed to feel that Texas might become a formidable competitor in the matter of cotton and sugar, and land-owners, gen-

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erally, feared that the fertile stretches of the new state would draw too many people away. As a consequence, Clay also issued a long, labored letter against immediate annexation. Dapper Mr. Van Buren, a past master in politics, likewise did some close thinking, turning his sleek side-whiskers and ambrosial curls first North, then South, and he too declared against the treaty as inopportune, although valiantly upholding the *right* to annex. As the Clay and Van Buren letters appeared the same day—April 27th—public opinion quickly concluded that there was an agreement between the two for the purpose of eliminating annexation as a campaign issue.

Clay was nominated by the Whigs early in May, and on the 27th an independent convention nominated Tyler. When the Democrats assembled, Van Buren discovered that he had underestimated the Texas sentiment, for the annexationists defeated him and nominated a “dark horse”—one James K. Polk of Tennessee. Dallas, of Pennsylvania, the nominee for vice-president, was no less strongly in favor of annexation, and the platform contained this plank: “Resolved, that our title to the whole of the territory of Oregon is clear and unquestionable: that no portion of the same ought to be ceded to England or any other power, and that the re-occupation of Oregon and the re-annexation of Texas at the earliest practicable period are great American measures.”

The Senate, resuming its discussion after the conventions, naturally fell into campaign attitudes. John Quincy Adams, never well-balanced at best, became stark mad in his frenzied denunciations of annexation as a plot of Southern devil-worshipers, and even went so far as to introduce a petition in the House, praying to dissolve the Union.<sup>2</sup> His very violence worked against itself, however, and any ill effects were still further offset by the support of Northern papers such as the New York *Herald*, the Boston *Post*, and the Philadelphia *Ledger*. What menaced most was the sullen anger of the Van Buren faction in the Senate, led by Benton of Missouri, for their resentment against Tyler and Calhoun turned them into bitter opponents of the treaty.

Tyler himself had the stupidity to put an effective weapon in

<sup>2</sup> *John Quincy Adams*, by John T. Morse, Jr., p. 281.

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their hands. From the beginning of the negotiations his course had been clear and intelligent, for when Almonte asked about annexation, saying that his country would consider it "equivalent to a declaration of war," Tyler had replied that Texas was a sovereign republic, and that in dealing with her the United States was without obligations to consult any other nation. Receiving information, however, that Santa Anna had expressed a desire to settle the question on a cash basis, the President secretly dispatched a messenger to Manga de Clavo in May. There was explicit instruction that the sovereignty of Texas must not be brought into question, but as the treaty empowered the United States to arrange a satisfactory boundary, there was no reason why the matter could not be adjusted before instead of after.

The offer was six million dollars, but when Santa Anna learned that it was not to be a cash payment which he could handle, but only an offset on American claims, he flamed forth in indignant refusal, and dashing off to the capital, asked Congress for thirty thousand men and four million pesos with which to protect his beloved country from shame and dishonor. Tyler's plain intent, as proved by the records, was to win Mexico's good will by a substantial money gift, but his maladroitness not only strengthened Benton's contention that Mexico's consent was necessary to the annexation of Texas, it also gave Santa Anna the chance to claim that Mexican ownership had been acknowledged.<sup>3</sup> On June 8th the treaty was rejected—35 to 16—but by a non-sectional vote, for Illinois and Pennsylvania were solidly affirmative, and New Hampshire, Georgia, North Carolina, and Missouri divided.

No sooner had the presidential campaign gotten under way, however, than it stood plain that the majority sentiment of the United States was strongly in favor of annexation. War with England over Oregon seemed imminent, and patriotism urged control of Texas to prevent British invasion at that point. The argument in favor of obtaining Mexico's consent was riddled by recalling that neither Adams nor Clay had consulted Spain when they attempted to buy Texas in 1825; as for "obligations" imposed by the treaty with Mexico, it was pointed out that the treaty with Spain in 1819

<sup>3</sup> Smith, *Annexation*, pp. 288-295.

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pledged the United States to respect Mexico as a Spanish possession throughout all eternity, yet within five months from Iturbide's *coup*, the independence of Mexico was recognized by President Monroe. Webster found himself deviled by his Bocanegra letters at every turn, and phrases in Clay's Raleigh speech aroused anger instead of apprehension. "Have we any security," he asked, "that countless numbers of foreign vessels under the authority and flag of Mexico would not prey upon our defenseless commerce in the Mexican Gulf, in the Pacific Ocean and on every other sea and ocean? . . . Suppose Great Britain and France, or one of them, were to take part with Mexico, jealous of our increasing greatness . . . and disposed to check our growth and cripple us?"

These fears seemed craven, and, in July, Clay swung sharply around, letting it be known that he would favor annexation if elected. Benton now put forward an annexation proposal of his own, and while still insisting that the consent of Mexico was necessary, the resolution stated that it "could be dispensed with when the Congress of the United States might deem said consent to be unnecessary." On August 20th Tyler withdrew in favor of Polk. Even so, every circumstance seemed in Clay's favor, for he was undoubtedly the most admired man of the day, whereas Polk, with only local fame, lacked every element of popular appeal. Such, however, was the sentiment in favor of the annexation of Texas that Polk won overwhelmingly, receiving 170 electoral votes to Clay's 105.

With this evidence of public approval behind him, Tyler resubmitted the treaty, but this time to the House. Foreign interference came to aid, for the British press thundered unceasingly that annexation would be resisted by the British Government as an act of rapine, and on January 25th annexation carried by a vote of 120 to 98, fifty-three Northern men voting affirmatively. In the Senate, Benton came over, as did all the Van Buren forces, and one month later, the slightly amended House resolution was adopted by a vote of 27 to 25. Of the affirmatives, thirteen were from free states, and fourteen from slave states, while of the negatives, fifteen were from free states and ten from slave states. The House concurred by a vote of 132 to 76, and on March 1st the joint resolution went to President Tyler for signature.

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Throughout these months, Texas had been undergoing the emotional spasms of a court-room spectator who suddenly finds himself in the prisoner's dock. Houston, bound by his commissioners—for cursing them in private provided no escape from their bargain—sat in mounting anger while Whig senators and Whig papers painted Texans as bandits, ruffians and slavers. The June defeat of the treaty came to him as happy release from a trap, and with restored enthusiasm he turned again to Europe. Great Britain was now reinforced by France, as Guizot, suave spokesman for Louis Philippe, the cat's-paw king, was eager that Texas should remain an independent republic as a barrier against the expansion and power of the United States.

Lord Aberdeen, Peel's Foreign Secretary, as a result of secret negotiations with Guizot, sent for Ashbel Smith, the Texas minister, in late June, and informed him that a "Diplomatic Act" would be entered into by England and France, guaranteeing independence to Texas in return for her pledge not to seek territory beyond the Rio Grande or accept annexation by the United States. Mexico would be compelled to approve the agreement, if unwilling, and the United States could do as it would. Smith, carefully recording the conversation, wrote that "the terms, effect and possible consequences to the several parties to it [including, of course, a possible war] were naturally considered, fully discussed and clearly understood between Lord Aberdeen and the minister of Texas. Both Louis Philippe and Guizot stated that France would join in the act."

The truth of this is borne out by the memoranda sent to his government by Tomas Murphy, the Mexican representative in London, reporting an interview with Lord Aberdeen on May 28: "If Mexico will concede this point [acknowledgment of the independence of Texas], England, and I have reason to believe, France, will join with her in this determination; will oppose the annexation of Texas, and moreover, he would endeavor that France and England will unite in guaranteeing not only the independence of Texas, but also the boundary of Mexico. On the other hand, should Mexico persist in declining to recognize Texas, the intention of England to prevent the annexation of that country by the United States might not be put in execution. Upon my remarking that it was not at all

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probable the American government would be willing to drop the annexation affair, even should the American Senate reject the treaty for the present, Lord Aberdeen replied that *provided that England and France were perfectly agreed* ‘it would matter little to England whether the American Government should be willing to drop this question,’ and that should it be necessary she would go to the very last extremity in support of her opposition to the annexation, but that for this purpose it was essential that Mexico be disposed to acknowledge the independence of Texas because otherwise an agreement in policy between her and England would be impossible.”<sup>4</sup>

There is also the memorandum sent by Aberdeen to Bankhead, Great Britain’s minister to Mexico, authorizing him to say to Santa Anna: “England and France shall also guarantee to Mexico the Californias, New Mexico and the other points of the northern frontier bordering on the United States, according to a treaty to be drawn up for that purpose. If the United States carry into effect the annexation of Texas to the North American Union, England and France will assist Mexico in the contest which may be thereby brought on.” There is no question as to the determination of Aberdeen and Guizot, and the records prove Houston’s perfect willingness to accept, for in his own hand he wrote the order: “Let our representatives be instructed to complete the proposed arrangements for the settlement of our Mexican difficulties as soon as possible, giving the necessary pledges . . .”<sup>5</sup>

Publicity, however, destroyed the project, for not only was opinion aroused in the United States, but a blast of pro-Americanism in the French Chamber drove Guizot into recantation. Moreover Santa Anna boldly twisted the Murphy memoranda to suit his purposes, and glibly informed the Mexican Congress that England had offered him aid for the re-conquest of Texas. The British minister denounced this “total want of good faith,” and stated formally that the proposed concert between England and France was at an end. Santa Anna’s reasoning was obvious. To stay in power he needed an army, and to keep the army loyal he needed money, and only by playing upon the passions and fears of his Congress with

<sup>4</sup> Smith’s *Annexation of Texas*, p. 389.

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *Annexation of Texas*, p. 391.

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respect to Texas could he hope for men and funds. Murphy, writing to his government, stated that Lord Aberdeen was "furious at the folly" of Santa Anna's renewal of hostilities. "Not only would she never recover that territory," but in event of war with the United States she would "probably lose other provinces and especially the Californias." Louis Philippe made his anger no less clear, saying to the Mexican minister: "To describe the kind of obstinacy which prevents seeing what is evident, we have a word in French which is very easy to translate into Spanish—*infatuation*. This *infatuation* prevents you from recognizing what everybody else sees: that is, that you have lost Texas irrevocably."

Neither the American elections, nor Tyler's resubmission of the treaty, nor the failure of England's mediation, worked any change in Houston's attitude. Retiring from office in December, 1844, his last words were: "The attitude of Texas now, in my apprehension, is one of peculiar interest. The United States have spurned her twice already. Let her, therefore, maintain her position firmly as it is and work out her own political salvation. . . . If Texas goes begging again for admission into the United States she will only degrade herself." As firmly as ever he held to his belief that Texas, joining with New Mexico, California and Oregon, could form a great and permanent empire, and Anson Jones, his successor, was equally bitter against annexation, though possibly less optimistic as to empire-building.

With Santa Anna driven into exile, the situation cleared again, for José Joaquín Herrera, assuming executive power, had the sense to see that Texas was lost beyond all hope of recovery, and that Mexico's one chance lay in intelligent bargaining. Negotiations were resumed at once, and in January, 1845, Captain Elliot and Count Alphonse Saligny, the representatives of Great Britain and France, received new and important instructions. The outcome of many meetings was an agreement that if Mexico would consent to acknowledge the independence of Texas, Texas would engage to stipulate in a treaty not to annex herself or become subject to any country whatever. Limits and other conditions were to be matters of arrangement in the final treaty, and Texas promised to submit

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disputed points respecting territory and other matters to the arbitration of umpires.

The agreement was signed on March 29, 1845, and with the secrecy that had marked the entire transaction, Ashbel Smith hurried back to London, while Elliot slipped into Mexico, reaching the City on April 14. The harassed Herrera was more than willing to accept the proposals at once, but, unfortunately, faced the difficulty of having to consult Congress. No sooner were the proposals made known than the Old Order commenced attack, vociferously aided by the Santa Anna faction. Fulminating and delaying, the opposition managed to defeat action until May 19, and this month of chatter worked ruin to the arrangement as far as Texas was concerned. When Elliot reached Galveston on May 30, he found public opinion completely changed. A. J. Donelson, Andrew Jackson's nephew, and a man of great persuasion and force, had arrived as the representative of the United States, and under his skillful direction, American sentiment had been fanned to a fever heat. Blood ties proved stronger than grievances, Houston was charged with having taken "British gold," and hundreds of pro-annexation meetings exerted so great a pressure that President Jones had been forced to call a special session of Congress for consideration of the American terms. On June 2, Jones made the Mexican negotiations public and Elliot committed the blunder of announcing that refusal meant war. It was a threat that aroused intense indignation instead of fear, and Congress, duly convening on June 15, rejected the Mexican proposals unanimously, and voted for annexation. The people ratified on July 4, a Constitution was framed and indorsed with equal enthusiasm, President Polk approved this Constitution on December 29, and necessary legislation extended the laws of the United States over what had been the Republic of Texas. Whereupon Mexico declared the existence of a state of war.

In no textbook, either in the United States or Mexico, is the mention of this stirring record, nor do any of the general histories of the two countries place any emphasis on the fact that Texas stood as a sovereign republic for nine full years, jealous of her independence, and that twice was it within the power of Mexico to have pre-

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vented annexation, at the same time securing powerful guarantees of her own territorial integrity. Like General Grant, the historians, with few exceptions, lump the Texas rebellion and the War of 1846 as one transaction without separating interval—a dark conspiracy of the slave interests initiated by Jackson, executed by Houston, and consummated by Polk—all without hitch or halt.

## 13: Manufacturing Hysteria

THE unhappy conflict between the United States and Mexico affords another impressive illustration of the manner in which history can embalm a lie. To-day it is the fixed belief of every Mexican that the war was deliberately forced by President Polk for the purpose of seizing territory from which additional slave states might be carved.<sup>1</sup> It is no less a belief in the United States, for Webster, Clay, Corwin and John Quincy Adams—more concerned with party victory than national honor—trumpeted these lies unceasingly, and historians have accepted their campaign buncombe without inquiry into the facts. As a result, the American attitude to the War of 1846 is one of pained apology, naturally strengthening and confirming every Mexican prejudice. Not in all the annals of partisan politics is there an instance of more successful mendacity, or more shameless, for the record, as in the case of the Texas Rebellion, is available, clear and sequential. Not only did Mexico force the war, rejecting every offer of peace, but the United States, so far from leaping at the chance to pillage a “weaker nation,” went through every wallow of humiliation in order to avoid the conflict. The “slave-owning South’s” determination to conquer “all Mexico” and the “West Indies” for the creation of a “maritime, colonizing, slave-tainted monarchy” stands proved as a baseless lie, for every fact shows that the one direct cause of war was the annexation of Texas. As early as 1843, Almonte, the Mexican minister, served notice upon President Tyler that his country would deem annexation an “act of war,” and no sooner had the treaty been signed on March 1 than he demanded his passports, declaring that Mexico would uphold her sovereign rights “at all times and by every means.” Shannon, the

<sup>1</sup> General Grant, in his *Memoirs*, p. 53, does not scruple to brand the war as “one by a stronger against a weaker nation—an instance of a republic following the bad example of European monarchies in not considering justice in their desire to acquire additional territory.” The incredible Bancroft, vol. 13, p. 344, gives “the acquisition of California and the desire to extend the area of slavery” as the one cause of the war.

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American minister in Mexico, was given his dismissal; the Mexican consulates in the United States were closed; the Mexican ministers in London and Paris were officially notified that "the campaign will soon begin"; and poor, unwilling Herrera, forced to ask Congress for men and money, commenced strengthening the fortifications at Vera Cruz and ordered Paredes and an army of six thousand to the Rio Grande.

James K. Polk, entering the White House on March 4, 1845, was greeted by these threats and military preparations, and dismay filled his cautious soul. For one thing, the Democrats had specifically and repeatedly assured the people that annexation would *not* mean war, and for a second and more important thing, every circumstance joined to make the United States unready for any armed struggle with the Mexicans. Not only was there the lack of an army and navy, but the country's desperate financial condition made the new President shrink from the prospect of war taxes and war loans. Added to this were the European complications that had to be feared and counted on. In particular, the controversy with England over Oregon was acute, for the exigencies of the campaign had forced Polk to take an uncompromising position, and the British press was openly declaring that hostilities could not be averted. Guizot's repeated demands for a "balance of power" in the Western Hemisphere were known to cover a keen desire for California. Alámán and Paredes were avowed monarchists, and reliable reports confirmed the rumor that England, France and Spain were intriguing to place a European prince on a Mexican throne. All of these nations, resentful of American growth and power, looked hopefully upon the Mexican trouble as the chance for a foothold in the New World that would give opportunity to dispute the growth of democracy.

In late March, therefore, W. S. Parrott, long a resident of Mexico, was dispatched confidentially to attempt the restoration of "friendly relations between the two republics," and in event of success, to give assurance that a "minister" would be accredited immediately. Rendering an account of his mission at a later date, Parrott wrote that he was "very precise in stating that the Government of the United States could never recognize in Mexico the right to claim an indemnity for the annexation of Texas to the

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American Union; but that, in a treaty of limits, for the sake of peace and good neighborhood, the United States would, no doubt, be disposed, as had been officially stated, to meet Mexico, in a negotiation, upon the most friendly and liberal terms." Reporting in August, Parrott urged that a minister be sent at once, but a sudden increase in Mexico's war preparations made Polk and his Cabinet ask for some official assurance that the envoy would be received. There the matter lagged until October, when Peña y Peña, Mexico's Secretary of Foreign Relations, took up the discussion with Black, United States Consul, and finally agreed to receive the envoy. Herrera realized clearly that the reactionaries were fanning a people's passions with the sole purpose of defeating domestic reform, and was no less eager for peace than Polk. Peña's official confirmation was accompanied by a request that the naval force at Vera Cruz be withdrawn, lest its presence assume the appearance of menace and coercion, and this was done immediately.<sup>2</sup>

On November 10th, John Slidell of Louisiana, a brilliant lawyer and a Spanish scholar, was appointed envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary, and sent to Mexico authorized "to counteract the influence of foreign Powers exerted against the United States in Mexico, and to restore those ancient relations of peace and good will which formerly existed between the Governments and the citizens of the sister republic." In his covering letter, Secretary of State Buchanan said:<sup>3</sup>

I transmit herewith copies of the despatch addressed by me under date of the 17th September, 1845, to John Black, Esq., consul of the United States at the city of Mexico; of a note written by the consul to the Mexican minister for foreign affairs, dated October 13, 1845; and of the answer of that minister, under date of October 15, 1845. From these papers, you will perceive that the Mexican government have accepted the overture of the President for settling all the questions in dispute between the two republics by negotiation.

In making clear the position of the United States with respect to territorial matters, Buchanan said:

<sup>2</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

<sup>3</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 69, 1st Session, 30th Congress, vol. 8.

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The Congress of Texas, by the act of December 19, 1836, have declared the Rio del Norte, from its mouth to its course, to be a boundary of that republic. It may, however, be contended on the part of Mexico, that the Nueces, and not the Rio del Norte, is the true western boundary of Texas. I need not furnish you arguments to controvert this position. You have been perfectly familiar with the subject from the beginning, and know that the jurisdiction of Texas has been extended beyond that river, and that representatives from the country between it and the Del Norte have participated in the deliberations both of her congress and her convention.

For the adjustment of a satisfactory Rio Grande boundary, Slidell was instructed to pay five million dollars. Proceeding, Buchanan stated explicitly that:

Whilst this government does not intend to interfere between Mexico and California, it would vigorously interpose to prevent the latter from becoming either a British or a French colony. You will endeavor to ascertain whether Mexico has any intention of ceding it to the one or the other power; and if any such design exists, you will exert all your energies to prevent an act which, if consummated, would be so fraught with danger to the best interests of the United States. The government of California is now but nominally dependent upon Mexico; and it is more than doubtful whether her authority will ever be reinstated. Under these circumstances, it is the desire of the President that you shall use your best efforts to obtain a cession of that province from Mexico to the United States. . . . Still, the attempt must be made with great prudence and caution, and in such a manner as not to alarm the jealousy of the Mexican government. Should you, after sounding the Mexican authorities on the subject, discover a prospect of success, the President would not hesitate to give, in addition to the assumption of the just claims of our citizens on Mexico, twenty-five millions of dollars for the cession.

Buchanan entered into the question of these claims with some particularity, and as they have come to figure in so-called history as the cause of the war, a detailed consideration of them is properly a part of the record. The damages asked were for injuries done to the lives and property of American citizens—forced loans, murders, confiscation of merchandise, stores and land-holdings, non-payment

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for goods ordered and delivered—and the first claims were presented by Poinsett in 1825. For eleven years, while the list grew by reason of new outrages, the various Mexican governments delayed and evaded, promising regularly, only to break every promise. The war threat of the exasperated Jackson in February, 1837, of which so much is made, was a perfectly natural procedure. Not only had Gorostiza severed diplomatic relations, after issuing his insulting pamphlet, but Mexico herself had just broken a peculiarly specific agreement. Moreover, Jackson's similar gesture against France had forced the French to commence the payment of awarded damages, and he doubtless figured that the Mexicans might be brought to terms by the same method.

Because of the Texas situation, it was agreed to make another diplomatic effort, and on assuming office, President Van Buren sent fifty-seven selected cases to Mexico with the explicit statement that the United States did not assume the absolute justice of the claims, and was only concerned with honest adjudication and settlement. The Mexican government twisted this frank admission into a confession of fraud, and in making answer, considered only four of the cases, substituting for Van Buren's list another collection of which the American State Department had never heard. Even as Van Buren went before Congress with the matter, Martinez, the Mexican minister, suggested arbitration, but when the offer was accepted, suavely announced that he was without power to act.

In 1838, however, an arbitration convention was signed, but Mexico did not ratify it, and it was not until 1839 that the United States managed to secure another. This provided for the appointment of two commissioners by each country, with an umpire to be selected, but Mexico let the time limit expire without action. The United States waived, however, and the joint commission was organized. According to Bancroft, in his *History of Mexico*, the commission "went into operation on the 17th of August, 1840, and in about nine months, say to the 26th of May, 1841, had passed judgment on every claim laid before it accompanied by the requisite vouchers."

This statement is so far from the facts that its falsity can not but be regarded as deliberate. The convention ran for eighteen months,

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but the Mexican policy of delay cut down this time until less than twelve months were left for actual work. Even when the commissioners were appointed, Mexico refused to consider the body as judicial in any degree, and denied the right of claimants to appear in person or by attorneys, and to get action of any kind, the United States gave in on both points. Not until December 24th did the inquiry start, and in its report on August 25, 1841, the commission recognized claims in the amount of \$2,026,139.68. Other claims aggregating \$1,864,939 were left undecided, and claims amounting to \$3,336,837 were not considered through lack of time.

Two years elapsed before the United States could gain any plan of settlement, then obtaining an agreement that stretched payment over five years in quarterly installments. Moreover, only half was to be in cash, the other half in treasury notes worth thirty cents on the dollar. For the alleged purpose of meeting these payments, Santa Anna levied heavy assessments on private property, resulting in large-scale confiscations, thereby adding to Mexican bitterness against the United States. He stole the money, however, and only the first three payments were made.<sup>4</sup> In December, 1844, drafts were given for the fourth installment, for which the American minister gave receipts, but Santa Anna refused to honor the drafts and also refused to surrender the receipts.

In emphasizing again that *all* questions in dispute were to be settled, Buchanan wrote:

But in what manner can this duty be performed consistently with the amicable spirit of your mission? The fact is but too well known to the world, that the Mexican government is not now in a condition to satisfy these claims by the payment of money. Unless the debt should be assumed by the government of the United States, the claimants cannot receive what is justly their due. Fortunately, the joint resolution of Congress, approved 1st March, 1845, "for annexing Texas to the United States," presents the means of satisfying these claims, in perfect consistency with the interests, as well as the honor, of both republics. It has reserved to this government the adjustment "of all questions of boundary that may arise with other governments." This question of boundary may, therefore, be adjusted in such a manner be-

<sup>4</sup> House Executive Document, No. 19, 29th Congress, 2nd Session.

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tween the two republics as to cast the burden of the debt due to American claimants upon their own government.

What Slidell was empowered to offer Mexico for an amicable adjustment of the Rio Grande boundary was five million dollars, less the \$1,726,000 in awarded claims, and for California twenty-five million dollars, plus the \$1,726,000. Under no circumstances, however, was he to "press" the California matter if it "jeopardized the success" of his mission. Here, in the confidential instructions of the Secretary of State to an accredited envoy, is proof positive that the United States did not want war, that it was willing to pay generously to settle the Texas boundary dispute, and, that while California was desired, rather than that the province should go either to Great Britain or France, it was *not* a subject to be urged at the expense of good feeling.

When Slidell landed at Vera Cruz on November 30th, Herrera's administration was hanging to power by a hair. To receive an American envoy was now regarded as outright suicide, and after blaming Slidell for arriving so inopportunely, and urging him not to show himself at the Capital, the harassed Peña finally evolved the theory that he had not agreed to receive a regular minister, but only a *special commissioner*.<sup>5</sup> On December 20th, therefore, Slidell was officially informed that he could not and would not be given a chance to discharge his "outrageous mission"—the amicable adjustment of all differences—and as a further sop to the opposition, Herrera announced that war would be commenced, and ordered Paredes to the Rio Grande at the head of six thousand men. His fate was that of all men who try to carry water on both shoulders. The reactionaries attacked him for having consented to receive Slidell, and the peace party deserted him for his cowardice in rejecting Slidell. Church and army redoubled their shouts of "betrayal!" and on December 14th, General Paredes, *turning back from Texas*, rebelled, on the ground that Herrera sought "to avoid a necessary and glorious war." General Valencia, in command in

<sup>5</sup> Although Senate and House Executive Documents give the full correspondence, the best consideration of the subject may be found in Justin H. Smith's *War with Mexico*, vol. 1, pp. 92-98. This work, as brilliant as it is exhaustive, is an example of what histories should be.

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the City, also "pronounced" on his own account, but Paredes, not to be cheated again, overawed this ambitious rival with superior numbers and seized executive power.

Poor Polk, too harassed to care about pride, at once instructed Slidell to present his peace proposals to the new government. Diplomacy, however, was not in Paredes' will or wish. Having just deposed Herrera for dealing with the United States, he was committed to a belligerent policy whether he liked it or not. As a matter of fact, he *liked* it. A foreign war—the Alamán Idea—would excite patriotism and turn popular attention away from the corruptions and tyrannies that crushed a whole people. In the second place, there was a conviction of victory, for as Roa Barcena admits in his *Memoirs of the North American Invasion*, "the general opinion held no doubt as to the certainty of our triumph, and in the various speeches made at the September anniversaries, we heard acclaimed with patriotic and bombastic variations the flattering theme that the Mexican flag would soon be waving over the ancient palace of George Washington."

There were, in fact, good grounds for the belief. As the London *Times* sarcastically commented, "The invasion and conquest of a vast region by a state which is without an army or without credit, is a novelty in the history of nations." The United States looked to be on the edge of hostilities with England: both England and France would undoubtedly furnish Mexico with money and materials; the assistance of Latin-America could surely be counted on "to defend Mexico against an always threatening enemy" and "its ever monstrous greed"; and there was also the fixed belief that the "Yankees" were cowards. European experts, familiar with both countries, praised the military genius of the Mexicans and rated the Americans as untrained and undisciplined, "fit only for Indian fighting." Desert and mountain seemed to provide Mexico with impregnable defenses, and even if an American army penetrated the interior, it would certainly perish of famine, thirst, and fatigue.<sup>6</sup> "If the war should be protracted and carried beyond the Rio Grande," predicted Captain Elliot, "I believe that it would require

<sup>6</sup> Smith, vol. 1, chapter 5, cites extensively from the French and English press, and deals exhaustively with Mexico's megalomania on the eve of war.

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very little skill and scarcely any exposure of the defending force, to draw the invading columns well forward beyond all means of support from their own bases and depots into situations of almost inextricable difficulty."

As for Vera Cruz, it was guarded not only by strong fortifications, but by treacherous waters and the deadly yellow fever, while behind it stood impenetrable mountain ranges. The British press and the French press joined with the Mexican press in pointing out the ease and certainty of Mexican victory. Privateers could destroy American commerce in the Pacific and the "dollar-loving Yankee" would soon "commence to squeal" when war losses added themselves to war taxes. Almonte reported that the North would refuse to aid in any war against Mexico, and that a Mexican army, descending upon the rich cities of the South, could depend upon the support of two million blacks and a host of Indians. Above all, according to the Church, it was a "holy war," and priests marched the streets preaching a crusade against the vile American heretics who conspired against God and religion.

As if these things were not enough, the army strutted in the grip of megalomania, induced by profound ignorance of the outside world and years of perfervid oratory. After the sack of Zacatecas, when Santa Anna was being hailed as "our Napoleon," one of his many generals said to a correspondent of the *Revue des Deux Mondes*: "You have seen what we are able to do and that we need have no fear of any nation in the world. We go now to give a good lesson to our insolent neighbors, the North Americans, and after that we will attend to proud England."

"What about France and Russia?" asked the interviewer.

"They may come later," was the answer, "but as yet they have given us no offense."

It was in this spirit, therefore, that Paredes rejected Slidell's proposals publicly and offensively on March 12, 1846, and hurried additional troops to the Rio Grande.<sup>7</sup> As far as the United States was concerned, the rejection of Slidell made impossible any further peace move on the part of Polk, as the American press had long been damning him for his "cowardly and spineless course," insisting

<sup>7</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 60, 30th Congress, 1st Session.

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upon an aggressive policy as demanded by honor and common sense. Moreover, the whole country seethed with war spirit. Memory of the Alamo, reënforced by Mexico's evasions and insults, aroused a natural resentment and this was exaggerated both by religious prejudice and selfish interests. The Protestant churches loathed the Catholicism of Mexico; and Illinois, Indiana, and other states in the region of the Mississippi, bankrupt and desperate, dreamed of expansion as a cure for their poverty. More potent than all, however, the excitement of war called to the youth of the country and the newspapers—as newspapers always do—fomented excitement to the pitch of hysteria. The whole press, Whig as well as Democratic, clamored for "action," and preached easy victory by branding the Mexicans as a degenerate race that could not and would not fight.

Even were the record not conclusive evidence of Polk's desire for peace, further proof is offered by the Administration's absolute unpreparedness for war. Not only had Polk taken no steps to enlarge the navy, but in September he had asked only twenty-six hundred additional men for the army and none at all for the navy. With Mexico announcing the existence of a state of war, and rushing troops to the Rio Grande, his one defensive step was the despatch of General Zachary Taylor to Texas with explicit instructions to "repel invasion," but at the same time "to avoid any acts of aggression."

The choice of headquarters being left to his own independent judgment, Taylor decided upon Corpus Christi, beyond the Nueces River, and reached there on July 25th with about fifteen hundred men. From this far point he watched Mexico blaze with preparations for war, and saw General Francisco Mejía march into Matamoros with three thousand men. He heard that Paredes was on the way with six thousand men, and later received news of the rebellion and Herrera's overthrow. Not until it became a certainty that Slidell would be rejected did Polk permit any advance, and then Taylor was ordered to proceed to some point on the Rio Grande, with express instructions to "abstain from all aggressive acts towards Mexico or Mexican citizens, and to regard the relations between the Republic and the United States as peaceful unless she should

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declare war or commit acts of hostility indicative of a state of war." Polk's purpose was to furnish Texas protection against attack, for the raids of 1842 had shown the ease with which Mexican light cavalry could blaze a trail of terror. On March 8th, Taylor left Corpus Christi with thirty-nine hundred men, and on the 28th camped opposite Matamoros, establishing his supply depot at Point Isabel, thirty miles away on the Gulf.

On reaching the Rio Grande, General Taylor sent General Worth across the river to assure General Mejía of amity and pacific intent. Although it was known by now that Slidell had been ordered out of Mexico, Mejía was asked to "enter into an arrangement to secure the peace and harmony of the frontier," and Taylor emphasized anew his "essentially pacific" purposes. While in no wise abating the claim of the United States to the Rio Grande as the boundary, Taylor expressed a desire for amicable relations until the two governments could decide the question, and agreed to leave ports open in the meantime. Mejía's refusal was definite and his attitude so hostile that Taylor mounted guns, and on April 7th commenced the construction of Fort Brown. On April 11th, General Pedro Ampudia, a partner of Paredes in revolution, arrived at Matamoros to assume the chief command, bringing three thousand additional troops, and orders to commence hostilities at once. Without delay, therefore, he ordered the Americans to retire beyond the Nueces under threat of attack. Taylor sent back a refusal and ordered a naval blockade, explaining to Ampudia that this was the "natural result of the state of war so much insisted on by the Mexican authorities as actually existing." For a second time, however, he asked for an armistice and again met with rejection. Even as Ampudia prepared to strike, despatches informed him that he had been removed, and ordered him to await the arrival of General Mariano Arista, the new commander-in-chief. Arista, carrying mandatory instructions to attack,<sup>8</sup> arrived on the 24th, and immediately sent sixteen hundred of his cavalry across the Rio Grande, a detachment ambushing Captain Thornton and a party of sixty-three Americans

<sup>8</sup> Paredes, in orders sent to Arista on April 18th, wrote: "It is indispensable that hostilities begin, yourself taking the initiative." In December, 1847, Arista himself testified: "I had the pleasure of being the first to begin the war."

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on the 25th, killing and wounding sixteen and capturing the rest.

On May 9th, President Polk received Taylor's report of the Thornton ambush, and after conferences with the Cabinet, sent a message to Congress on May 11th, declaring "war exists, and notwithstanding all our efforts to avoid it, exists by the act of Mexico herself." The lie that the "slave-holding South" planned and fomented the war is given additional denial by the Senate's reception of the message. Calhoun and Benton, the Southern leaders, led an instant opposition, but while they blocked action, the House roared its approval by a vote of 174 to 14. On the following day the Senate swept Calhoun's stubborn resistance to one side by a vote of 40 to 2, and virtually unanimous votes proceeded to appropriate ten million dollars and authorize the enlistment of fifty thousand men.

On the theory that the Nueces River was the boundary line, American and Mexican historians have branded Taylor's march as an "invasion of Mexican territory" and the real cause of the war. Even if all of Mexico's declarations and militant activities be put to one side, the "invasion" theory falls flat. Texas, successfully rebelling in 1836, had declared the Rio Grande as her boundary; Santa Anna had signed the treaty recognizing this boundary, and for nine years every necessary act of sovereignty had been asserted and exercised. Up to the very banks of the Rio Grande the republic had established post-offices, post-roads and land offices, and in both the Congress and the Convention of Texas, which gave their assent to the terms of annexation to the United States, were representatives residing west of the Nueces.<sup>9</sup> As President Polk declared, "this was the Texas which by the act of our Congress of the 29th of December, 1845, was admitted as one of the States of our Union." What gives the contention a final proof of absurdity is the fact that Corpus Christi itself was west of the Nueces, and *in the disputed territory*, yet Taylor had headquarters there for eight months without protest from Mexico or complaint in the American Congress.

Never at any time, prior to hostilities, was the Mexican demand

<sup>9</sup> Polk's War Message cites these acts in detail. *Senate Executive Document*, No. 327, 29th Congress, 1st Session.

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confined to the strip between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. It was the *whole* of Texas that was claimed. In October, 1847, during the peace negotiations, Mariano Otero, a senator from Jalisco, issued a pamphlet attacking the United States for its "program of conquest," yet making admissions that gave the lie to every Whig contention. Said Otero:

In the name of Texas, the nation was oppressed for many years by successive governments, destroyed by revolutions, and impoverished by enormous contributions. Every one of the governments that appeared upon the shifting scene promised to incorporate the usurped territory, but never attempted it; while, at the same time, Texas went on increasing in population, obtained her recognition from foreign governments, acquired every day new guarantees for her existence. . . . Re-conquest was then the only policy of our administrations, and when, on the eve of annexation, an indisputably patriotic and upright Executive saw the Texas question in a new light, and, at the risk of his existence, with the rarest and most praiseworthy disinterestedness, endeavored to solve it in a wise manner, and secure the nationality of the republic by erecting Texas into a small independent nation, which, under the guarantee of other powers, should never be annexed to the United States . . . even this intention became a party weapon, and a motive for revolt; men of the most exalted worth were called traitors, and the government was overthrown. Re-conquest again became our policy . . . the military rebellion of San Luis [that of Paredes] gave rise to a government pledged to resist all accommodation; which government . . . commenced hostilities and under its fatal auspices, began this inconceivable and deplorable series of defeats. The government installed by the rebellion of 1846 could not do otherwise than continue that war, and without its having been discussed, either then or before, on what terms an honorable peace might be brought about, it has been assumed as a basis that Mexico should listen to no proposals until our arms should drive back the Americans beyond the Sabine. . . . The American forces did not advance to it [the left bank of the Rio Grande] until the war became inevitable, and then only as an army of observation.

Much has also been made of the charge that Polk did not "consult Congress before resorting to hostilities," and that his "secret

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and unauthorized" despatch of Taylor to Texas placed Senate and House in a position where they were "forced" to support a course that both disapproved. This trumpery was first advanced by Webster on November 6, 1846, in his famous Faneuil Hall speech, when he said that Polk's action constituted an "invasion," and branded it as "an impeachable offense." Woodrow Wilson, in his *History of the American People*, follows Webster implicitly, as do the majority of American historians. According to Mr. Wilson, Polk "had not consulted Congress before he ordered General Taylor forward to the Rio Grande, and brought this momentous matter to a head, though it had been in session when he ordered it." It is a contention that has no larger force than the other campaign lies evolved by Webster and the Whig politicians. Instead of recognizing the Nueces as a boundary, Congress had created a port of delivery at Corpus Christi in December, 1845, and in May, 1846, the very month of war, established post-routes between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Moreover, when Taylor proceeded to Corpus Christi in July, 1845, Congress voted the necessary supplies. So far from not consulting Congress, senators and representatives were summoned to the White House throughout the Sunday before the delivery of the war message, and the Committee on Military Affairs of the House, called together in the afternoon, agreed instantly on fifty thousand men and ten million dollars in money, sending that word to Polk.

To summarize: After nine years as a sovereign republic, so recognized by the nations, Texas accepted annexation to the United States; Mexico at once declared the existence of a state of war; President Polk, refusing to accept the gage, begged parleys, and when Herrera consented to receive an envoy empowered to settle all disputes, sent Slidell with instructions to pay five million dollars for a satisfactory Rio Grande boundary, and twenty-five million dollars for California; Herrera, facing revolution, refused to receive Slidell; Paredes, successfully rebelling, took office "pledged to resist all accommodation," and after expelling Slidell, sent troops to the Rio Grande with mandatory instructions to commence hostilities at once, declaring that the avowed object of the war was

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not the maintenance of rights in the Nueces-Rio Grande strip, but to "drive back the Americans beyond the Sabine." Taylor did not advance to the Rio Grande "until war became inevitable, and then only as an army of observation," and he had fired no shot when Arista's men crossed the Rio Grande into territory claimed and held by Texas for ten years, killing and imprisoning American soldiers.

## 14: Blunders versus Incompetence

If ever a man was born under a lucky star, dandled on the lap of the gods and reared as the petted darling of Chance, that one was Zachary Taylor. Sixty-two years old, uneducated, and with a military experience confined to Indian fighting, "Old Rough and Ready," as he loved to be called, had personal courage as his one qualification for leadership. About him were trained soldiers destined to become the great military scientists of their day—Ulysses S. Grant, William T. Sherman, George B. Meade, "Fighting" Joe Hooker, Braxton Bragg, "Chickamauga" Thomas, and Albert Sidney Johnston—but with the true frontiersman's contempt for "book larnin'," Taylor waved their advice away, never failing to treat it with derision. Fort Brown, the field-works thrown up across from Matamoros, was stupidly placed, and Point Isabel, where he had dumped his supplies and munitions, was insufficiently garrisoned. Never at any time did he make use of McCulloch's Texans, all born scouts.<sup>1</sup> Arista's cavalry took him completely by surprise, and not until May 1st did he learn that a Mexican army of six thousand men was being ferried across the Rio Grande behind his back. A true child of destiny, however, it was his fortune to be pitted against an enemy too incompetent to profit by incompetency. When Arista crossed his sixteen hundred cavalrymen on the 24th, he could have sent them to Point Isabel for the easy capture and destruction of Taylor's base, or he could have selected a position on the one road that led from Fort Brown to the Point, and waited at his leisure for the Americans to walk into his trap. He did neither, but called back the cavalry and delayed action until he could send over his whole army, a task somewhat complicated by his failure to provide more than three small boats.

Finally realizing that war had begun, and that the Mexican flanking movement threatened his supplies, Taylor shook off his sluggish

<sup>1</sup> Houston, on July 3, 1850, in the course of a speech before the Senate, bitterly arraigned Taylor for his blunders, charging that the employment of 500 Texas rangers would have prevented Arista's crossing and thus averted the war.

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complacence and hurried to Point Isabel. Arista, still busily engaged in drowning men by his criminal negligence in the matter of boats, made no effort to stop the march, but on May 3d managed to start a bombardment of Fort Brown. The defense consisted of a company of infantry and a field battery, but as Taylor had not thought to provide an adequate ammunition supply, an assault could have carried the fort without great trouble. Again Arista blundered, deciding upon a siege, and leaving Ampudia in charge of the investment, he hurried off on the road to Point Isabel to lie in wait for Taylor's return. On May 8th, encumbered by wagons which he persisted in dragging with him over the protest of his officers, "Old Rough and Ready" came upon Arista's army at Palo Alto, about ten miles out from Matamoros. It was his instant idea to depend entirely on infantry—"bay'nits" were always his preference—but the impassioned insistence of the West Pointers finally induced him to see the wisdom of artillery.

An infantry engagement was Arista's one hope, as a matter of fact, for he had four thousand men against Taylor's twenty-two hundred, but instead of charging on his own account, he accepted the American choice of weapons and engaged in an artillery duel, although the very first exchange showed plainly that his obsolete guns could not carry even to Taylor's front line. All afternoon the fool held his soldiers as stationary targets for deadly gun-fire, and when he did order a charge, it was only to bog his cavalry in morasses, as he had made no previous survey of the battlefield. Canales, a lawyer whose sole business had been rebellion and blackmail, led his men away from the engagement at its beginning, and Ampudia's chief activity was to circulate reports that Arista had "betrayed" them. All the bravery of the rank and file could not overcome the handicaps of outworn guns, insufficient ammunition, and stupid leadership, and it was a demoralized army that followed Arista into retreat under cover of night.

Morning witnessed a resumption of the duel of blunders. Instead of pursuing, Taylor fussed around with his precious wagons, and Arista, instead of hurrying across the Rio Grande to Matamoros, retreated five miles and pitched camp in the heart of the chaparral at the spot called Resaca de la Palma. He took no pains to guard

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against surprise, but as Taylor took no pains to reconnoiter when he did advance, the action which commenced at two in the afternoon was more a sudden hand-to-hand struggle than a battle. Again, as at Palo Alto, the Mexicans ended the American belief that they could not and would not fight, for though poorly armed, half-starved and unled, Arista's soldiers fought with a fury that won the ungrudging respect of Taylor and his officers. As usual, Canales deserted at a crucial moment, crumbling the right wing, and Arista led a panic-stricken retreat to the Rio Grande. Only two scows were found for ferriage—hundreds drowned in the frantic scramble—and the leaderless horde fairly invited annihilation, but Taylor, who had fought the entire engagement without even notifying Fort Brown, three miles away, now neglected to order the garrison to attack the fugitives, nor did he pursue them himself.

It might reasonably be assumed that Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma would have exhausted Taylor's incompetence, but he soon proved the presence of strong reserves. Utterly demoralized, without food, ammunition or faith in their officers, Arista's army huddled helplessly in Matamoros, but for eight days "Old Rough and Ready" did nothing. He had refused to arrange for a pontoon bridge; he would not send to Point Isabel for boats, and when Arista asked for an armistice on May 17th, he crowned his incredible blundering by giving the Mexican army *permission to retire*. Arista, however, was only partially able to profit by Taylor's stupidity, for there were neither transportation facilities nor supplies. On the march into the interior hundreds died of hunger and exposure—scores killed themselves from sheer heartbreak—and when Linares was at last reached, there were only 2,638 men left out of the initial force of six thousand.

With Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma went all hope of Mexican success. The Mexican army, from which so much had been expected, stood revealed as a top-heavy, graft-rotted organization, not even the courage of citizen-volunteers being able to balance the incompetence of their commanders. Of the twenty-four thousand officers—this number for twenty thousand men—scarcely five per cent. had had military training, and while the army budget for 1845 was twenty-one million dollars, twice the amount used by the

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United States, the two battles proved that the great part of the money had gone into the pockets of the political "generals" and their underlings. The sure knowledge that Paredes and Alamán were planning to bring a foreign prince to a Mexican throne not only chilled patriotism but enraged the professional soldiers, for it meant imported mercenaries and the end of the presidential auctions. Worst blow of all, the two defeats, coming on the heels of stubborn refusals to accept advice, ended hope of assistance from Great Britain and France. As Disraeli genially remarked, how was it possible to aid a country in which "every government was born in a revolution and expired in a riot." Buchanan's circular letter to the European powers was also a factor of no mean value, for his presentation of Polk's peace efforts was clear and convincing, and ended with the assertion that "whilst we intend to prosecute the war with vigor, both by land and by sea, we shall bear the olive branch in one hand, and the sword in the other; and whenever she will accept the former, we shall sheathe the latter."

Baron von Camitz, the Prussian Minister of Foreign Relations, admitted that it must be far from easy to live on amicable terms with a country such as Mexico, "where anarchy reigns and where the Supreme power was constantly contested by a succession of military chieftains, who were compelled to maintain their usurped authority by the same unworthy means by which they had obtained it." Spain expressed equal disgust for Mexico's attitude, mentioning that not a single treaty obligation had been lived up to. Confronted, therefore, with the gross inadequacy of the army, with royalist plots, and the certainty that aid need not be expected from Europe, Mexico fell victim to the old paralysis of inaction and self-pity.

Into this situation Santa Anna's agents projected themselves with shrewd vigor, recalling the Dictator's habit of easy pillage, the acrobatic Almonte left the Cabinet to plot, and even Gómez Farías was induced to join the movement, a lasting stain on his intelligence. Paredes, drunken and distrustful, blustered boldly enough, filling the jails with Liberals and suppressing the opposition newspapers, but each day brought his end nearer. He knew that he must go to the Rio Grande to check Taylor's advance, but he knew also that revolution would break forth the moment he turned

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his back. Forced to make a choice at last, the drink-befuddled Dictator put Nicolas Bravo in the president's chair, and marched away with four thousand men. Once out of sight of the Capital, however, he halted them and slipped back to observe events. He did not have long to wait, for on August 4th, General Mariano Salas, commanding in the City, "pronounced," in the name of "Federation, Santa Anna and Texas," declaring that Paredes and Alamán were about to import a foreign prince, and particularly attacking the administration for its laxity in pushing the war. Paredes, slipping out again in an attempt to reach his army before it deserted, was betrayed by his own escort. It had been his favorite boast that when he went down he would "drag the temple" with him, *a la* Samson, but when Salas observed the rules of revolution and courteously offered his "old friend" a safe escort out of the country, Paredes accepted gratefully and humbly.

On August 16, Santa Anna and his young wife landed at Vera Cruz, but widespread bitterness was so evident that he pleaded his leg as an excuse for stopping at Manga de Clavo. Much has been made of the fact that he was permitted to pass the American blockade, but as Polk explained to Congress, he knew Santa Anna to be a traitor and an incompetent, and regarded his presence in Mexico as a distinct military asset.<sup>2</sup> Seen from Manga de Clavo, the situation was decidedly less rosy than when viewed from the cockpits of Havana. He knew that any open championship of peace would send Herrera back into the presidency, and yet a rotted army and empty coffers held little hope of military success. Paredes had squandered a million, leaving less than two thousand pesos in the Treasury, and the Church and the merchants refused to be squeezed for another centavo.

After due consideration, Santa Anna struck boldly, first ordering Salas to restore the Constitution of 1824 and then escaping the perils of the presidency by insisting that he wanted no other title than that of "Defender of the People." Always a gambler, the outcome of his brooding was to stake everything on One Great Victory that would permit him to accept Polk's peace proposals as "the capitulation of a defeated enemy." Ordering the evacuation of Tam-

<sup>2</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 4, 29th Congress, 2nd Session.

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pico—although this left Vera Cruz open to attack—he managed to collect ninety thousand pesos, and commenced the mobilization of an army at San Luis Potosí. Finally, on September 28th, he left for the front himself, rattling the dice of power in sweating, twitching hands. For five months the American army had been on Mexican soil, yet the very men responsible for the war had given time and energy to nothing else but their own obscene struggle for place and power.

Not once, however, had Taylor attempted to take advantage of this criminal delay, for he still persisted in refusing advice and sneered at every recognized rule of war. Sitting stock-still at Matamoros until July 6th, after facilitating Arista's escape, Taylor finally decided on concentration at Camargo, about one hundred and twenty miles away on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande. With a hundred healthful spots to choose from, he picked the one pest-hole of the region, and for weeks his men died like flies. Finally, on August 19th, he decided on a movement against Monterey, but though his military advisers told him of its stone fortifications, he would take no siege guns. With ample supplies at hand he provided his men with rations for fifteen days only. More than fifteen thousand soldiers were in Camargo, but he "guessed" that six thousand were enough for the work in hand. Failing even to secure pack-mules, the recognized mode of traveling; ignoring advice that begged him to use the Texas scouts; possessing no information of the country; he reached the massive walls of Monterey without other artillery than four field batteries, two 24-pound howitzers and only one 10-inch mortar. But none of these things had power to bother "Old Rough and Ready." His personal courage, dirty clothes and hail-fellow-well-met ways made him the idol of his men, and if anything went wrong he could blame it on Polk and Marcy. Already the Whigs were boozing him as their presidential candidate, and this knowledge added a captious insubordination to his natural dislike for intelligent suggestion.

Francisco Mejía, succeeding the deposed Arista, had managed to concentrate four thousand men at Monterey, but even as he was working out a plan of battle, word came that he himself had been deposed in favor of Pedro Ampudia, Paredes' right hand in revo-

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lution, and widely esteemed as *un valiente* for having fried a rebel's head in oil. Ampudia arrived on August 29th, but brought only thirty-five hundred men, as most of his professional soldiers had returned to the City to share in the rewards of Salas' revolution. Even as the new chief looked about him, Santa Anna came to power, and realizing that the force was too small for the extensive, widely separated fortifications of Monterey, sent word to Ampudia to evacuate at once, concentrating at Saltillo, where he could easily hold the Americans at bay until the arrival of the main army. Eager for glory, Ampudia defied the orders and prepared to make himself the "Hero of Monterey," his fierce *moustachios* quivering as he belledowed "Victory or death!" Canales and three thousand cavalry were told off to harass the American advance—an easy matter, for "Old Rough and Ready" marched as carelessly as he thought—but Canales spent his time plundering the countryside and on September 19th, Taylor's army ended a perfectly placid journey and camped in a pleasant walnut-grove before the walls.

Monterey is still one of the lovely cities of Mexico, tucked between spurs of the Sierra Madre, and the Americans, sick of the desert, burst into a great shout as they saw white spires gleaming against the soft green of the San Juan Valley. To the eyes of the military experts, however, there was nothing hospitable in the outlook. Directly in front of them loomed the Citadel with its strong walls and menacing guns, and west of the town, where the road to Saltillo ascends at an abrupt angle, towered four equally strong fortifications. At the right rose the steep peak of Independence Hill, earthworks crowning the summit, and lower down, atop a lesser eminence, frowned the Bishop's Palace. To the left, across the swift Santa Catarina River, Federation Ridge shot up almost perpendicularly, bearing redoubts, while some six hundred yards away was El Soldado, a heavily walled fort. Hopeless as it seemed, these western fortifications were the attack decided upon, and on the afternoon of the 20th, General Worth and two thousand men were told off for the flanking movement, Hayes and McCulloch leading the way with their Texans. It was a movement which defied every military law, being made in plain sight of the enemy, but Ampudia

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did nothing, with his usual skill, and Worth camped for the night after an uninterrupted climb of seven miles.

The rain came down in sheets; the men were without food and shelter, but Monday's dawn saw them tearing their way through the chaparral to the Saltillo road. Now, at this late hour, Ampudia launched an assault, and with his true incapacity, launched it with less than the required force. Nájera's squadron of lancers and Romero's cavalry brigade charged with furious courage, but the Texans delivered a galling rifle fire from behind cover, and from higher ground two batteries poured down a deadly hail that decimated the attack. In possession of the Saltillo road, cutting off Ampudia from his base of supplies, Worth now turned his attention to Federation Ridge. Wading the Santa Catarina, waist-deep and swift, an assault was made from the rear, and by four o'clock both the summit and El Soldado were captured. All that still stood out was the Bishop's Palace and Independence Hill, the giant crag which the Mexicans deemed impregnable. At three in the morning of Tuesday, under cover of a storm so violent that the heavens seemed to have opened, the terrible climb commenced. Clinging to trees and shrubs that tore like knives, digging their fingers into fissures, at dawn the Americans fell on the Mexicans as though from the clouds. Fierce hand-to-hand fighting carried the summit, and from this vantage-point shell and shrapnel were rained down on the Bishop's Palace. By afternoon the last of the western forts were in Worth's hands, for, as Santa Anna had foreseen, Ampudia's lack of men made proper garrisoning an impossibility. Federation Ridge and El Soldado had one hundred and seventy-five men, Independence Hill about sixty and the Bishop's Palace two hundred and fifty, each more pitifully inadequate than the other.

Taylor, for his part, had bluffed with infantry Sunday afternoon by way of diverting attention from Worth, and bombarded for twenty minutes on Monday morning with his futile light artillery. As usual, he had rejected all efforts to supply him with information, treating the whole affair as an "Injun fight," and giving Meade's map of the Mexican works scarcely more than a cursory glance. The low but formidable redoubts were contemptuously dis-

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missed as "them mud forts," and he saw no reason why they should not be taken with the "bay'nit." Early on Monday forenoon, in consequence, he gave free rein to his stubborn ignorance and instructed Colonel Garland to "lead the head of your column off to the left, keepin' well out of reach of the enemy's shot, an' if you think you can take any of them little forts down there with the bay'nit, you better do it."

At the head of eight hundred men, Garland blundered forward into a maze of narrow streets, ditches and stone walls, racing into a hail of lead and turning corners only to meet deadly crossfire. Bragg's battery, ordered up, proved helpless in the twisting lanes, and Garland was forced to fall back, leaving most of his men on the field. Supporting troops, charging for a mile under direct fire from the Citadel, ran straight into strong redoubts, more than a third falling in the first few minutes. Victory seemed certain for the Mexicans, but as was invariably the case, every defense was insufficiently manned, equipment was inadequate, ammunition failed and scurvy politicians, masquerading as officers, deserted at critical moments. At noon the Tannery redoubt, and the stone building behind it, were abandoned, another instance of Taylor's amazing luck.

Attention was now turned to the Devil's Corner, a strong earth-work on high ground, and with the lion-like courage that was his one recommendation, "Old Rough and Ready" led the assault on foot. Here, as was to be proved on every field that followed, was the great advantage of the Americans. They had confidence in their leaders, while the Mexicans, fighting with equal bravery, knew that it was only a question of time when their commanders would desert. Not all the wild daring of Taylor, Grant, Jefferson Davis, Johnston and Hooker could avail against stone walls and murderous artillery fire, however; a madness of confusion soon reigned, and at five o'clock retreat ended a day of incredible folly.

All Tuesday Taylor sat idle, but Ampudia, instead of attacking, took advantage of the night to abandon the Devil's Corner and all other outworks, concentrating in the heavily fortified plaza. Seeing the retreat, Taylor ordered an immediate advance, and again his infantry stormed protected positions that proper artillery would have demolished without the loss of a man. By three o'clock he had

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won within a square of the plaza, and then, for some reason never explained, sounded the retreat. Not once throughout all this time had he sent a single order to General Worth, waiting impatiently in the hill forts for some word that would end his inactivity. Wednesday noon, however, hearing the roar of battle below, the fiery Worth sent a column down, the men entering the City from the west as Taylor went out on the east. As a result, Ampudia turned his full strength to the new attack, but Hayes and his Texans fought with irresistible fury, and trained intelligence directed every effort. From house to house the Americans worked their way, blowing up dividing walls with six-inch shells, and when darkness fell they were close to the plaza.

Even so, Ampudia still had his chance of victory, for his losses were only twenty-nine killed and two hundred and thirty-eight wounded, and his position was one of exceptional strength. The Americans, as a result of Taylor's bungling, were scattered in small groups, and a series of smashing attacks would have won the day decisively. The Mexican general, however, had little of the courage of his race, and when Thursday dawned, great was Taylor's surprise and delight to receive an offer of surrender. One quicker in thought and more energetic in action would have perceived the demoralization back of the offer, and leaped forward to win its full advantage, but "Old Rough and Ready" not only permitted withdrawal of the Mexican troops, exacting no paroles, but agreed to an eight weeks' armistice during which the Americans themselves were not to advance.

Upon receiving the news, Polk surged with a very natural bitterness.<sup>3</sup> Not only had Taylor rejected a second opportunity to destroy the Army of the North, but his unwarranted assumption of executive authority paralyzed the whole American effort. The armistice, fortunately, was subject to the sanction of the respective governments, and Taylor was ordered to end it at once. Stubbornly enough, however, he gave November 15th as the date in his notice of termination—a few days before it would have expired of itself—

<sup>3</sup> Secretary of War Marcy had specifically forbidden Taylor to grant any armistice until a treaty of peace should have been concluded. *Senate Executive Document*, No. 107, 29th Congress, 2nd Session.

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although this consideration did not prevent Santa Anna from denouncing "the treacherous Yankees" for a breach of faith. On November 16th, Taylor left Monterey and climbed to Saltillo, seventy miles away, and settled down for the winter.<sup>4</sup> This city, a natural fortress, and important for its control of the principal pass across the Sierra Madre, was taken without a shot, for when Santa Anna sent troops for its defense, they discovered that not one single order had been carried out with respect to the repair and improvement of fortifications.

<sup>4</sup> "After the surrender of the garrison of Monterey, a quiet camp life was led until midwinter. As has been the case on the Rio Grande, the people who remained at their homes fraternized with the 'Yankees' in the pleasantest manner. In fact, under the humane policy of our commander, I question whether the great majority of the Mexican people did not regret our departure as much as they had regretted our coming." Grant's *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 18.

## 15: Homeric Marches

**D**URING the months that "Old Rough and Ready" blundered to victory in the Rio Grande region, other expeditions were tearing at the frail structure of Mexican power. Commodore Conner, cruising in the Gulf, received instructions to take Tampico; General Wool was ordered to San Antonio for the conquest of Chihuahua, and Colonel Stephen W. Kearny was sent across the burning plains to New Mexico and California, President Polk happily confident that both provinces were like ripe plums, ready to fall into the hand.

Kearny set out from Fort Leavenworth in June with about two thousand men—his own First Dragoons, a St. Louis artillery battalion and Doniphan's Mounted Volunteers—and as the necessity for speed had been urged upon him, he drove his little army over the blazing prairies at a furious pace. Across Kansas and Colorado, up Raton Pass and down the steep mountain-sides to the New Mexican plain he lashed his footsore following, reaching Las Vegas on August 15th. Except as to spirit it was a sorry array, for hardship, alkali water, and short rations had wasted and sickened the soldiers, and the few remaining mules and horses staggered in their traces.

Gloomy reports met them. It was true enough that the people were sick of the rule of Armijo, a thief with Santa Anna's genius for loot; but the cunning governor had spread the report that the Americans meant to seize homes and lands and brand the inhabitants like so many mules. As a consequence, an army of three thousand confronted Kearny's weary men, and the way to Santa Fé was thick with impregnable positions. Armijo, however, was a coward as well as a thief, and tales of the fighting at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma chilled his fiery determination to make every defile a sepulchre. Falling back before the American advance, he finally decided that flight was the one intelligent course, and after futile endeavor to hide the nine ancient guns that constituted his artillery, the craven scurried off to Chihuahua with the huge fortune accu-

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mulated by a decade of corruption and misrule. On August 18th, without having fired a shot, Kearny entered Sante Fé and took possession of the territory in the name of the United States.

Hearing that General Sterling Price and twelve hundred Missourians were on their way, the dynamic commander called his three hundred dragoons and again plunged into the desert, spurring for the west with California as his goal. New Mexico, while important because of the Santa Fé caravan trade, was far less imperative a prize than the Pacific Coast, for California's occupation by France or Great Britain would give Europe a foothold in the New World, and timorous Polk sickened at the thought of the complications that must ensue. Even as Kearny and his dragoons roweled their fagged horses, however, hopeful of new glory, other Americans were snatching the laurels.

Like New Mexico, California had been virtually an independent province for years. Following the example of Texas in 1836, the indolent dons had mustered sufficient energy to expel all government troops and raise a Lone Star flag of their own. Bustamante, unable to do anything else, recognized the revolutionary government in 1838, but Santa Anna attempted subjugation in 1843, only to have his forces defeated and expelled. Paredes, coming to power, and realizing the importance of a gesture, ordered one thousand soldiers to California in the early months of 1845, but Juan Alvarez captured the seven ships, and the troops, after looting Mazatlán, gayly declared for Santa Anna and returned to the Capital.

Left to their own devices, the Californians amiably submitted to the dictatorship of Pio Pico, the governor, and José Castro, his *generalissimo*, all worn out with the exertion of revolt. At the time, the population consisted of about ten thousand whites and some fifteen thousand Indians. Monterey and Los Angeles, each with fifteen hundred people, were the principal towns; there were no courts, no mails, no organized communication, and only the most primitive agriculture. Small wonder that France and England looked with covetous eyes upon this fair domain, almost asking to be taken, or that poor Polk lived in a state of tremor.

On June 24, 1845, at a moment when Mexico was most vociferously declaring war because of Texas, Commodore Sloat of the

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Pacific squadron was instructed to be on his guard against the intrigues of European powers. Though warned to be "assiduously careful to avoid any act which could be construed as an act of aggression," he was ordered to occupy such ports as he could when he learned "beyond a doubt" that Mexico had "declared war." On October 17th, Thomas O. Larkin, our consul at Monterey, also was told to "exert the greatest vigilance in discovering and defeating any attempt which may be made by foreign governments to acquire a control over that country." Furthermore, "should California assert and maintain her independence, we shall render her all the kind offices in our power."

Thus matters stood until the late spring of 1846 when Pico and Castro fell into a bitter quarrel over the proper division of customs receipts, and gathered their forces for an armed clash. Pico, eager for additional strength, came out in favor of a British protectorate, and Castro, secretly planning an independent government with himself as sole dictator, made friendly gestures in the direction of France. Shrewd Thomas Larkin, long a beloved and respected resident, quietly urged the merits of the United States with considerable success. In the midst of this well-bred, purely conversational wrangle, down from the north came a wild shout, and John Charles Frémont, the "Pathfinder," hurled himself upon the scene.

It was in 1842 that this colorful adventurer had first plunged into the west, mapping the way to South Pass and giving his name to a peak in the Wind River Range. In 1843 he completed his survey of the Oregon trail, marching to the Columbia River with brave, resourceful Kit Carson as his guide, and it was in the dead of winter that he drove his starving, freezing men across the Sierras into California, and fell in love with its enchanted valleys. Again in December, 1845, he came to Sutter's Fort on the Sacramento, this time under instructions to map routes between the Great Basin and the Pacific Coast, but with a secret dream of glory in his reckless heart. Like every one else, he knew that California was as ripe fruit on the bough, and Senator Thomas H. Benton, his powerful father-in-law, had long been preaching its acquisition.

Riding down the San Joaquin Valley, whipping such Indians as got in his way, Frémont reached Monterey only to have an angry

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dispute with General Castro. For a while he breathed flame, threatening battle, but thinking better of it, slipped away to the north and engaged the Klamath Indians in a series of running fights. By June he was convinced that war between the United States and Mexico *must* have begun, and on the 14th, in the very best Pizarro manner, thirty-three Americans took possession of Sonoma, and flung to the heavens a crude flag decorated with one lopsided star and a most impossible bear.

Meanwhile, Commodore Sloat had been lying off Mazatlán, trying to learn what was going on in the gay world outside. By June 7th he had gained confirmation of the fighting at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma, and July 2d found him at Monterey holding perplexed conversation with Consul Larkin. His instructions were to occupy the California ports, but Larkin begged delay, insisting that the people could be won to a peaceful transfer of their allegiance. As they argued, down from the north came word of Frémont's coup, and straightway Pico and Castro joined forces to repel the "barbarous invaders." Convinced that Frémont must have been acting under President Polk's orders, and alarmed by the approach of a British squadron, hesitant Sloat landed two hundred and fifty men on July 7th, and took possession of California in the name of the United States.

On July 19th, Frémont arrived, a red handkerchief wound about his brow, Delaware Indians as his bodyguard, Kit Carson as his chief of staff, and some hundred and sixty shaggy frontiersmen at his back. When Sloat learned that the Sonoma seizure was purely the product of the Pathfinder's own initiative, his dismay knew no bounds, and, falling ill shortly thereafter, he turned the shore command over to Commodore Robert F. Stockton, as headstrong a man as he himself was cautious. Straightway Stockton and Frémont, curiously akin, launched an aggressive campaign against Pico and Castro, sending them at full speed in the direction of Sonora.

Larkin took peaceful possession of Los Angeles in August, but the two Hannibals, with keener eye for the dramatic, contrived a more impressive entrance the following day, charging in at the head of cheering troops and noisy bands. The proclamation of

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American ownership was repeated; wholesale arrests were followed by equally wholesale paroles; and the versatile Commodore even took time to write a code of laws after the Draconian model. This done, he went north with the Pathfinder, leaving Lieutenant Gillespie of the Marines in charge with only fifty men. It was a stupidity that soon made itself felt, for a certain Lieutenant-Colonel Flores gathered several hundred men, in shameless violation of their paroles, and compelled Gillespie's surrender. Captain Mer-vine and three hundred and fifty men, sent to quell the revolt, were not provided with artillery, and the one small cannon of the Mexicans beat them decisively. Convinced that the uprising could be nothing less than a great popular revolution, Stockton sailed on to San Diego without stopping, and Frémont, turning back at Monterey, hurried to the Sacramento for more men and horses.

Let us now return to Kearny, toiling through the desert in happy ignorance of these wild happenings. In August, when the conquest of California was presumed to be complete, Kit Carson had been sent east with the great news, and the famous scout met Kearny at a point near Socorro. As there was no fighting to be done, according to the report, two hundred dragoons were sent back, and Kearny pressed on with the remaining one hundred, taking Carson with him. About forty miles from San Diego, tidings of the new revolt reached the Americans, and Kearny immediately rushed off a rider to beg aid of Stockton.

The relief party proved grossly inadequate, for an overwhelming force of Californians attacked in the early morning of December 5th, and not only did Kearny lose eighteen killed and thirteen wounded, but found himself caught in a trap. Carson, under cover of night, wriggled through the line on his stomach, and ran the forty miles to San Diego in his bare feet, returning with sufficient troops to drive away the Californians. With forces joined, Stockton wanted to wait for news from Frémont, but the driving Kearny insisted upon an aggressive campaign, and all set off for Los Angeles. By this time, the army of Flores had dwindled to less than four hundred and fifty men, and although he tried to delay the advance by various ambushes, the Americans reached the town

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without serious interruption, and took formal possession on January 10th.

Speculation as to the whereabouts of Frémont was soon set at rest. Throughout November and December he had been dashing up and down the Sacramento, aimlessly, though very picturesquely, and finally collecting some four hundred men, decided to ride south rather than board a waiting warship in San Francisco Bay. He came within nine miles of Los Angeles on the very day that Stockton and Kearny took possession, and great was his dismay to learn that the chance for glory had been snatched from him. Never long at a loss, the Pathfinder suddenly leaped upon his swiftest horse and spurred off to Cahuenga, where Andreas Pico and the remnants of California's "army" sat in gloom and indecision. With the same audacity that impelled his Bear Flag flourish, Frémont arrogated to himself the business of treaty-making, and soon the delighted Californians found themselves accepting terms that guaranteed life, liberty, property, free movement, and exemption from military service as well as from any oath of allegiance.

Although outraged and furious, Stockton and Kearny realized the unwisdom of acrimonious discussion, and approved the treaty. To guard against similar performances, however, Kearny produced his authority from the Secretary of War, and took charge of the new territory as supreme commander. Commodore Stockton, as a navy man, refused to recognize the orders, and Frémont, furious at being asked to surrender his governorship, flung bold defiance in Kearny's face. Up and down the land he rode on various dramatic journeys, happy with his Indian bodyguard and gay red handkerchief, but April 1st brought word from Washington that confirmed Kearny's authority in every particular. So ended the colorful melodrama, for with Frémont's departure, the Californians sank back into their usual happy drowse, confident that the new government could not possibly be worse than the old.<sup>1</sup>

While these events were marching forward in California, the other expeditions were meeting with an equal measure of success.

<sup>1</sup> For his conduct, Frémont was tried by a court martial and found guilty, but inasmuch as he was the son-in-law of powerful Senator Benton, Polk pardoned him. A violent Abolitionist, he was the presidential candidate of the Republican party in 1856.

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Commodore Conner, coming before Tampico on November 14th, fully expectant of a hard fight, found that the gallant General Parrodi had fled from the city with his troops. As had been the case at every other point, the garrison had not been adequate to man the defenses; guns and ammunition were lacking, and Parrodi and his officers took quick advantage of Santa Anna's orders not to risk a battle unless victory seemed certain.

As for General Wool, he left San Antonio on September 23d at the head of fourteen hundred men, and on October 29th entered Monclova without having met an enemy or fired a shot. There he remained for four weeks on account of Taylor's armistice, and as the fall of Monterey and Saltillo had lessened necessity for the capture of Chihuahua, it was decided to join "Old Rough and Ready." Parras, loveliest of all Mexican cities, was reached in early December, and here the Americans rested from their journey, waiting for further orders. They came on December 17th—a hurry call for help, for Taylor heard that Santa Anna planned to attack—and in four days Wool and his men were at Agua Nueva, ending a march of nine hundred miles through hostile territory without a sign of resistance.

Kearny, on leaving Santa Fé in August, had told Colonel Alexander Doniphan and his Missourians to take the road to Chihuahua, thinking that Wool might need assistance. Before setting out, however, Doniphan found work to do among the Indians, far more hostile than the Mexicans, and for seven weeks he whipped Eutaws and Navajos from plain to mountain and back again, finally forcing treaties that bound them to peace and submission. This done, he gathered his eight hundred wild riders about him, and on December 12th led them off into the savage desert.

A giant in stature, red-haired and blue-eyed, Doniphan was peculiarly the commander for the reckless Missourians who gave obedience only when they gave love. Not one had ever received a cent of pay, they marched on half rations, and their clothes afforded small protection against the biting winds, but these were small matters when adventure called. Across the dreaded Jornada del Muerto they made their way, gay and indomitable, reaching the Rio Grande, about thirty miles from El Paso, on Christmas day. The garrison

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of the town numbered about eleven hundred, but only five hundred could be induced to advance against the American approach, and these scattered and fled after the exchange of a few volleys.

El Paso received the "invaders" with open arms, but the news received by Doniphan left him little spirit for fiestas and fandangos. Wool had not gone to Chihuahua, Sonora was preparing to attack him from the rear, and the Mexicans told large tales of the mighty army that Governor Angel Trias was preparing for his reception in event he pushed ahead. Instead of scaring the Missourians, this information was received with distinct pleasure, and a joyous shout went up as Doniphan announced that it was going to be a case of "Chihuahua or bust."

Burning by day and freezing by night, often without water for days, they staggered on, and after twenty-three days of bitter hardship, faced the enemy at the crossing of the Sacramento River. Trias, working with might and main against every discouragement, had gathered some four thousand soldiers, and the position taken on the Sacramento's banks seemed to be impregnable. The highway and the road, the only possible approach for the Americans, were dominated by redoubts, breastworks and actual fortifications, and every officer assured his command that the cowardly ragamuffin Americans were at last to be delivered into their hands.

One look at the waiting Mexicans, crouched behind their strong defenses, and Doniphan swept his troops and wagons to the right, and after a swift dash, plunged suddenly down the crumbling banks of a dry river-bed, so steep that even goats would have drawn back from its hazards. Men, horses, and wagons fell to the bottom in one confused heap, but a second later all were streaming through the sand, and attacking the fifty-foot climb on the farther side. Before the startled Mexicans could recover from their pained amazement, the Missourians had gained a high plateau and were charging like so many unchained devils. Two hours of fierce fighting and every fortification on the north bank was in Doniphan's possession, and as his guns began to carry across the river, despair seized Trias and his men. Under fire some artillery was dragged through the ford, Sierra Sacramento was flanked by a reckless dash up a mountainside, and as night fell, the Mexicans fled in wild disorder.

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Chihuahua, with its fourteen thousand people, was occupied next day without further resistance, and there the Missourians made themselves at home, hardships forgotten and perils ignored. It was a happy life, well suited to their vagrant souls, and when word came from Wool for Doniphan to join him in Saltillo, all were of the opinion that they did not care to go. The giant commander, facing them with his jaws clamped, said, "Boys, I am going home to Sally and the children, and by God, you're going with me." And they did. Wool reviewed them in Saltillo on May 21st, and then sent them back to St. Louis, where not only Missouri, but the entire nation as well, applauded them for the five-thousand-mile march that had given American courage a new and glorious certificate.

## 16: Gambling for a Presidency

**G**ENERAL WINFIELD SCOTT, as head of the army, should have proceeded to Mexico with the firing of the first shot and assumed command. Polk and Marcy wished it, for Taylor's essential incompetence was well understood, but Scott was ever the Great Gentleman, and expressed a very definite unwillingness to supersede "Old Rough and Ready" in the hour of his brilliant victories. More than this, he felt strongly that the Rio Grande campaign could not possibly prove conclusive, and presented plans for an attack on Vera Cruz, thus opening a way into the heart of the country.

There was never any chance of friendship, or even understanding, between James K. Polk and the "Hero of Lundy's Lane," for no two men were ever more antagonistically opposed in every human respect. The President, lean, angular and homely, lacking social graces, had been a Nashville lawyer prior to his sudden elevation, and his habits of thought and life were formed along provincial lines. A man of very real ability, and honestly eager to serve his country, it was still the case that early environment had cast him in an iron mold, and he was ever the helpless victim of those narrownesses, suspicions and distrusts which curse the rural mind.

Scott, on the other hand, was an Olympian. Six feet five inches tall, he was a joy to all eyes; equally at home in an Indian tent or the courts of Europe, his essential charm was enriched by every accomplishment, for he could lead a cotillion as brilliantly as a charge, turn out a sonnet, cook a dinner, win a war or make a peace. A major-general at twenty-eight, the hero of many hard-fought fields, famous for diplomacy as well as courage, fortune had failed him only in the matter of the presidency of the United States.

Added to the distrust that this brilliance would have excited in any event, Polk knew that the Whigs had decided to nominate Scott in 1848, and with all his partisan soul he loathed the necessity of increasing a rival's popularity by providing him with new oppor-

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tunity for dramatic exploit. Why not continue Taylor in the field command? The illiterate backwoodsman might not be the most competent soldier in the world, but at least political pretensions could not be looked for from him. As a consequence, Scott was soon being damned as an impractical visionary, derided as "Old Fuss and Feathers," and hounded for indiscreet remarks, and when public opinion was sufficiently prejudiced, Marcy threw him onto the scrapheap.

A heavy penalty was exacted for this shabby trick. In undisturbed possession of Saltillo, "Old Rough and Ready" fell into another of those lethargies that contrasted so curiously with his berserker moods when embattled. Advancing the theory of a purely defensive war, he planned a line to run from Parras, through Saltillo, Monterey, and Victoria, then on to Tampico. Thus holding Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon, and Coahuila, a stretch large enough to pay a generous indemnity, the burden of offense could be placed upon the Mexicans. These views he put forward with all the assurance of a Napoleon, imperiously insisting that the administration bow to his superior judgment.

Instead of a simple backwoodsman without political aspirations, Polk now found himself faced with a fullblown presidential candidate, drunk with adulation and as tractable as a mad bull. When volunteers were sent, Taylor protested on the ground that there was nothing for them to do, and if the flow stopped, he bellowed that "Polk, Marcy & Co." were abandoning and betraying him; every suggestion was repelled as "meddling," and every one of his mistakes blamed on the President and Cabinet and other "contemptible" and "evil men" who hated him and plotted his ruin. Well was the President entitled to curse the day he had put aside competent, high-minded Scott for one whose incapacity kept apprehension at fever pitch, even as his unfairness aroused helpless fury.

Taylor's proposal to wage a defensive war, passively holding conquered territory, was received with anger and dismay in Washington. In the first place, it was just the kind of warfare that Santa Anna would have begged on bended knees, so perfectly did it fit his needs; and in the second place, the famous line did not even have the merit of impregnability. Less than fifteen thousand men

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were to garrison a stretch fully eight hundred miles long, and the most casual inspection revealed great gaps through which the whole Mexican army could be pushed at any time. Nevertheless, Taylor's position as a popular idol made Polk unwilling to invite a quarrel, for he knew that "Old Rough and Ready" would not stop at anything if given the excuse for one of his premeditated rages. The Congressional elections in November went heavily against the Democrats, however, and the President realized that while an aggressive policy had its dangers, certain destruction would result from continued adherence to the defensive theory.

Some bold blow was a necessity, and after much consultation it was decided to capture Vera Cruz as the first movement in a march to the City of Mexico, and no other than Scott was called upon to command the expedition. He was now looked upon as politically harmless, and though parochial Polk still distrusted his glitter, Marcy had the shrewdness to see that "Old Fuss and Feathers" was the one military leader of the day with sufficient force, ability, and vision to drive through the desperate adventure. Speed was of the essence in the undertaking, for unless Scott could win Vera Cruz and reach the mountains before summer, his command might have to endure the ravages of yellow fever. As time forbade the assembling of a new volunteer army, it was decided to draw on Taylor's command for veteran troops, leaving him enough for defensive purposes only. Scott wrote fully and courteously of his plan, and sacrificed valuable time to journey by way of Camargo for a personal interview, but Taylor fell into a fury, and instead of reporting on December 23d, plunged off to take Victoria, although General Patterson was already on his way to occupy that city.<sup>1</sup>

Scott, not finding Taylor at Camargo, designated the troops he desired—about eight thousand—and ordered their immediate concentration at the mouth of the Rio Grande. Taylor himself was instructed to return to Monterey and assume the defensive and under no circumstances to risk an advance. The forces left him, fully nine thousand, were ample for garrison purposes, and had he not assured Polk time and again that a northern campaign could not

<sup>1</sup> General Scott, in his *Memoirs* (pp. 404-410), considers the controversy in detail, quoting Taylor's own words to prove bad faith and insubordination.

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possibly prove conclusive and that a "strict defensive" was the one proper course? Instead of obeying orders, however, "Old Rough and Ready" mailed home the announcement of his presidential candidacy, together with a vigorous denunciation of the "intrigues" of the administration. Scott, always his friend, was blasted as a "humbug"; all but his own supporters were arraigned as rascals, lunatics and "evil men," and with one last bellow about betrayal and abandonment, the headstrong old man proceeded to gamble the outcome of the war by pushing out from Monterey in search of the enemy. If victory should be won it would prove him a great general, able to conquer in spite of all interference; if defeated, he could escape blame by charging that Polk had stripped him of his army. Taking less than five thousand of his nine thousand men, he marched away over hill and dale in the general direction of San Luis Potosí, without plan of any kind, finally pitching camp in the valley of Agua Nueva on February 4. There, by the cool waters, he decided to wait for "something to turn up."

Taylor's defiance of orders came to Santa Anna as a blessing from Heaven. For four months he had been lying idle with his army in San Luis Potosí, drinking, gambling, and looting, not daring to take the chance of an advance. Pamphleteers were openly denouncing his evacuation of Tampico, Saltillo, and Victoria as acts of treachery, and the charge spread that he was acting in secret concert with the invader. Valencia, plotting openly, had already deserted with a goodly number of men, and at any moment a "revolution" might burst upon him. When, therefore, he received the almost incredible news that Taylor had left the stone walls of Monterey and was in the field with less than five thousand men, Santa Anna had the right to feel that his luck had turned, and with every band playing, he set out on January 28, confident of the victory so urgently demanded by his political fortunes. Close to twenty-five thousand men marched away on what was to be a journey of death. Without tents or blankets, half-fed, half-clothed, burning by day and freezing by night, the doomed host struggled on through desert and over mountain. As a survivor described it, "The cold tormented us in a way difficult to describe, and the army was already broken-spirited. More by instinct in our desperation than from clear knowledge of

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our actions, we set fire in different places to the yucca plant grove in which we were. The flames ran up to the tops of the trees, and an ocean of fire swept from tree to tree in terrible waves of blasting flame. The spectacle was sublime, and by its light we saw the hungry soldiers dying of starvation, shivering with cold, like an army of ambulant corpses.”<sup>2</sup> By February 21st, when Agua Nueva was reached, desertion, exhaustion and death had reduced the army to seventeen thousand.

Not until the enemy was upon him did Taylor have any idea of Santa Anna’s approach, for, as was his habit, “Old Rough and Ready” had taken no precautions against surprise. Belatedly realizing the weakness of his position, he now fell back seven miles to the Valley of Buena Vista, leaving a rear guard to destroy a vast store of supplies, and then hearing that General Miñón and fourteen hundred cavalry threatened his rear, he hurried to Saltillo, leaving Wool in command. A stroke of fortune that, for this skilled general’s selection of battleground and handling of troops were all that averted complete disaster. Sweeping forward on the morning of the 22d, Santa Anna could have won the day at a blow had he charged, for Wool was not ready for battle, but, instead of attacking, the master bungler wasted the morning in maneuvering and parleys. When he did commence to fight at three o’clock, he fooled around with feints and skirmishes until dark and then withdrew. All advantage had been with the Mexicans, however, and when Taylor rode back on another of his meaningless trips to Saltillo, he left a gloomy army behind him.

At dawn on the 23d, the real attack commenced. A fairly strong force under Ampudia succeeded in turning the American left, but Blanco’s advance against the center was not in sufficient strength and the fire of Washington’s battery beat it back with terrible loss. Pacheco and Lombardini were then sent forward at the head of separate columns to aid Ampudia’s flanking movement, and their fierce assault broke down the defense and sent five or six companies into headlong flight. The American left was now completely turned, opening a clear way to the rear, but a sudden advent of Mississippians and Indians checked the advance, and Blanco’s repulse re-

<sup>2</sup> *Historia de Méjico*, by Niceto de Zamacois, vol. 12, p. 576.

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leased men and artillery sufficient to throw back Pacheco and Lombardini. Even so, a large number succeeded in joining Ampudia, and the battle was Santa Anna's for the taking.

An attack in full force upon Taylor's center would have prevented the detachment of troops for the protection of the left, and Ampudia would have been able to sweep to the rear, join Miñón and deliver a crushing blow. The frantic Dictator did nothing of the sort, however, and Bragg and Sherman were sent with their guns to strengthen the left. Hemmed in on every side, outnumbered, riddled by heavy artillery fire, Ampudia's men fought with desperate fury, but were finally compelled to retreat when what had been a battle became a slaughter. Too late—always too late—Santa Anna finally decided to charge the center at four in the afternoon, and massed his troops in a great ravine, swinging the San Patricio battery—manned by American deserters—to elevated ground on the right flank. This was the moment chosen for a charge by "Old Rough and Ready," who had come to the scene from Saltillo early in the forenoon.

Hardin and the First Illinois, Bissell and the Second Illinois, and McKee and the Second Kentucky sprang forward at the order, and as the three regiments came almost to the muzzles of their guns, the waiting Mexicans rose from the ravine and poured in a devastating fire. Leaping over the bodies that lay in windrows, they swept against Taylor's center with the force of a torrent. Grape-shot tore great holes in their ranks, yet never once did they halt; even as the last gun was silenced, Bragg and Sherman came dashing up from the north field, followed by the Indiana and Mississippi regiments. Their terrific artillery fire and flank attacks by the infantry turned the tide of battle, and under the inspiration of Taylor's furious cries, "Give 'em hell!" the center held fast.

When night fell, both sides were defeated. Taylor had lost seven hundred men, killed and wounded, and some eighteen hundred had fled the field, while the Mexican loss was two thousand, with probably four thousand desertions. Santa Anna's plight, however, was the more desperate. His men, already exhausted by the terrible march from San Luis Potosí, had poured out the last of their strength; the broken nature of the ground made his cavalry valueless, and his artillery was no match for that of the Americans. A second day of

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battle might end in complete defeat, but on the other hand, victory was always something that could be claimed. Leaving fires burning and sentinels singing, the wretched politician deserted his wounded and scourged his heroic army into retreat. Riding swiftly and luxuriously in advance, carrying some captured banners and guns in token of triumph, he reached San Luis Potosí in comfort, his leaderless men following as best they could. Starving, half-naked, ravaged by dysentery and typhus, more than three thousand perished on the ghastly journey. Taylor had gambled and won a presidency. Santa Anna had gambled and lost a war.

So ended the campaign in the north. Valencia, arriving at San Luis Potosí late in May, blustered for a while and then hurried back to his political plotting in the City without having struck a blow. Left undisturbed, for Coahuila, Durango, and Nuevo León were without stomach for further fighting, Taylor had only to keep order, but even this he could not do with any approach to efficiency. Texans, taking quick advantage of every minor outbreak, killed and sacked with unflagging enthusiasm, and hordes of volunteers arriving upon the scene gave themselves over to drunkenness and disorder. After a few feeble gestures, "Old Rough and Ready" made no further attempt to check lawlessness, and in November asked leave of absence and hurried home to devote full time to his presidential candidacy. Wool, succeeding, ruled with an iron hand, not only checking the excesses of his own men, but putting an end to the guerrilla warfare waged by Canales and Urrea. In May, 1848, law and order were so firmly established that he proclaimed an amnesty.

## 17: In the Footsteps of Cortes

WHILE Santa Anna's game of chance was being played in the north, the Gómez Farías government rocked drunkenly on insecure foundations. Instead of the unity and single purpose commanded by the country's danger, there was only hate and confusion. Michoacán, Durango, Jalisco, Zacatecas and other radical states, distrusting Santa Anna, refused support entirely, and nothing had power to stir the patriotism of the privileged class. General Scott, after conquering well-nigh insuperable obstacles in the matter of transport, supplies, and munitions, had come before Vera Cruz on March 5th with ten thousand men, but even this peril worked no change. Gómez Farías, aided by the equally indomitable will of Benito Juárez, a young Oaxaca statesman, fought fiercely against the stubborn opposition of the Church and its mean intrigues, and finally forced through a law which empowered them to raise fifteen million dollars for war purposes, "by mortgaging or selling by public auction the estates held in mortmain." This, of course, applied specifically to Church property, and the hierarchy, careless of anything but its wealth, turned at once to insurrection. So-called "élite battalions," recruited from the aristocracy, were the instruments used for the destruction of the government. Had they marched to Vera Cruz, as ordered, the port might have been saved, but instead of that they turned their guns upon the Palace on February 27th, the clergy aiding by furious denunciations against Gómez Farías as "anti-Christ." The people, however, rallied to the support of the administration, and for twenty-three days these citizen forces, untrained and poorly armed, beat back the rebels.

The luck of Santa Anna was never more in evidence than at this juncture. Coming to the City as a fugitive, fleeing from a disaster caused by his incredible incompetency, he had no right to expect anything but shame and execration. His arrival, however, was at a time when the issue of the insurrection hung in doubt, and priests and

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merchants hurried forward with loud hosannas, hailing him as "the man of the hour." The Hero of a Hundred Defeats adjusted himself to the situation with instancy and aplomb, and waving his captured banners and emphasizing the two guns he had managed to take from Taylor, marched forward in such pomp as he could muster. His arrival in Guadalupe de Hidalgo was made the occasion of a *Te Deum*, and on March 23d he entered the City and banished Gómez Farías, taking over the executive power. Even as the mountebank searched his soul for new bombast, word came that Vera Cruz had surrendered.

Scott, facing the menace of the yellow fever season, dismissed all idea of a siege at the very outset. At dawn on March 9th he commenced landing his force at a point three miles from the City, and by midnight ten thousand men were on shore without one fatality. As an explanation of the garrison's inactivity, fifteen hundred of the defense were penned up in San Juan Ulúa, while not all the efforts of Governor Soto and General Morales had been able to gather more than three thousand National Guardsmen in the City itself. Moreover, they were waiting for leaders, arms, and reënforcements from the Capital, for there was still ignorance of the clerical revolt that had paralyzed the strong arm of Gómez Farías, and left the national defense without head or force. Moving swiftly under cover of darkness, Scott's investment was complete by the 16th, and under the able direction of Lee and Beauregard, strong batteries commanded town and fortress. On the 22d, a demand for surrender was made. This refused, Scott served formal notice of bombardment, warning foreign residents and all non-combatants to leave the City. A night and day of constant firing proved ineffective, but on the 24th heavy naval guns were brought ashore, and Lee planted them behind a hill not eight hundred yards from the City walls. Now commenced a bombardment that threatened destruction, and on the morning of the 26th a complete capitulation was proposed and accepted.

Much has been made of Scott's "cruel and inhuman" conduct by Mexican historians, encouraged by British and even American comment at the time. The London *Times*, forgetful of England's bombardment of Algiers and Copenhagen, denounced Scott's course as

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"atrocious and barbarous," and Horace Greeley declared that Vera Cruz had been "reduced to ruins with tremendous destruction of life." As a matter of truth, Scott's warning gave full time for non-combatants to leave the city, and the report of Matson, the British naval commander, placed the death list at eighty soldiers and one hundred civilians. Not only was there small loss of life, but San Juan Ulua was untouched, and within ten days after the American occupation, Vera Cruz itself showed no signs of bombardment.<sup>1</sup> The surrender proceeded entirely from panic, and the conviction of the defenders that they had been deserted and betrayed. Scott's subsequent course proved his wise humanity, for he not only accepted the parole of the five thousand prisoners, but made every concession in the interest of amity.

Santa Anna, receiving the news, raged like a madman, and totally ignoring his own responsibility and the shameful treachery of the "élite battalions," cursed Morales and Soto for "cowards and traitors," and screamed to the country: "A sepulchre opens at your feet. Let it at least be covered with laurels!" The remnants of the army of Buena Vista were now in the City, and although still exhausted by their terrible march, these veterans were hurried forward to check Scott's advance. Canalizo, that "Lion of Mexico" who had nothing but his roar, was sent to fortify the mountain passes between Vera Cruz and Jalapa, with particular instructions to hold the National Bridge where the highway crossed the Antigua River. In return for the annulment of the laws of Gómez Farías, the Church furnished two million pesos for supplies, a house-to-house canvass added a little more, and on April 2d Santa Anna took the field, leaving Pedro Martín Anaya as president *ad interim*.

Still faced with the necessity for speed, for the yellow fever season was close at hand, Scott ordered his army forward on April 8th. A climb of eight thousand feet confronted the Americans, away from their base of supplies and into the heart of the enemy's country, but every man had faith in Scott, and at this great leader's side

<sup>1</sup> De Lara and Pinchon, in *The Mexican People*, p. 155, merely repeat the regular charges of other historians when they say that "the hideous slaughter continued for four days, and after 2,500 men and uncounted numbers of women and children had been destroyed, the city surrendered to its invaders." Smith, in his *War With Mexico*, vol. 2, p. 33, supports Matson's estimate by many other authorities.

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were such officers as Robert E. Lee, George B. McClellan, G. P. T. Beauregard, Thomas J. Jackson, later to be known as "Stonewall," John B. Magruder, and George E. Pickett, while from the north had come Worth and Grant. The blazing coastal plain fell behind, every turn of the mountain road opened new vistas of loveliness, and the enchanted soldiers marched in peace as well as through beauty, for not until the fourth day did they meet with any sign of the enemy. Santa Anna had arrived upon the scene only to learn that Canalizo had fled the National Bridge, dismantling its fortifications, and that the same course had been pursued at other strong points. At the pass of Cerro Gordo, some fifty miles from Vera Cruz, the raging Dictator determined to make his stand, for here the highway plunged into a gorge with precipices on the one side and great ravines on the other. Two towering eminences, La Atalaya and El Telegrafo, commanded every approach, and as the American advance consisted of only twenty-five hundred men, the mountebank threw off his leaden apprehensions and disposed his twelve thousand soldiers in full confidence.

General Twiggs, advancing as though on parade, walked blindly into the trap on April 12th, and only Santa Anna's impatience saved the Americans from annihilation. Scott, hurrying up with six thousand additional men, two days later, arrived just in time to prevent further folly, and after surveying the ground, decided that the one chance was to turn Santa Anna's left and gain his rear. Lee, sent through the ravines and dense chaparral, returned with report of a feasible route and early on the next morning, the 17th, Scott commenced the frontal attack that was to mask the flanking movement. The result of the day's work was the capture of La Atalaya, although Twiggs' recklessness in converting a feint on El Telegrafo into an attack came close to bringing disaster.

At dawn on Sunday, the 18th, Scott ordered a general advance, and Harney, charging the steep ascent of El Telegrafo, reached the top at ten o'clock, closely followed by Magruder. As the issue hung in doubt, Shields and his brigade plunged out of the chaparral into the road at the Mexican rear. Common intelligence should have warned Santa Anna to guard against such a movement, but even so, a battery faced the newcomers and they also found themselves con-

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fronted by Canalizo and two thousand horse. The "Lion of Mexico," however, had little stomach for hand-to-hand fighting, and started a disgraceful retreat that spread panic through the entire Mexican battle line. Santa Anna followed this precious example, and his men, left without a leader to direct their desperate courage, joined the rout. No stand was made at Jalapa, nor at La Hoya, a frowning pass which offered every defensive advantage, nor at the strong fortress of Perote. All were abandoned for Scott's unresisted occupation. In Perote alone were found fifty guns, five thousand muskets and twenty-five thousand shells which Canalizo had not even attempted to carry away.

On the following day the Americans marched into Jalapa, just escaping the clutch of the yellow fever that now took possession of the valley. Scott, however, was still faced by many gloomy problems. True, he had captured three thousand prisoners, but lack of supplies necessitated their release on parole, and he knew it was only a question of days when they would be facing him again. The rainy season was less than a month away, ammunition and food were lessening rapidly, and what was worse, the expiration of an enlistment period forced him to let three thousand volunteers return to the United States. To retreat, however, was to confess defeat, and with iron decision he ordered an advance to Puebla.

Santa Anna, reaching the "City of the Angels," thought to make a stand, but he could collect only forty-five hundred men, and the chill indifference of the Pueblans compelled suspicion as to their loyalty. Unable to force loans, filled with distrust of his fellow politicians, he essayed a futile thrust at the advancing Americans, and then scurried to the Capital, where in flat defiance of his pledged word, he kicked out Anaya and resumed the presidency. Dismayed by the bitterness of the opposition, he made the gesture of stepping aside, but when an election seemed to have resulted in favor of Bravo, he recalled his resignation. The political parties, scarcely more than factional groups, could find no ground of agreement, and taking advantage of these selfish confusions, Santa Anna imprisoned Almonte, but yesterday his closest friend; banished Arista and Ampudia, and sent the scheming Valencia to San Luis Potosí. Though able to crush military plots, nothing that he could do had

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power to restore public confidence in his leadership. The Liberals attacked his incompetence and corruption; Sonora, Sinaloa and Durango were considering the formation of a new republic, and six of the central states had organized a coalition based upon bitter distrust of the government. A peace party, rallying around Herrera, was also gaining ground, and above all, the people now knew the truth about Buena Vista.

On May 15th, General Worth and four thousand men entered Puebla, the population of eighty thousand proving amiable if not cordial, and on the 28th, Scott arrived and proceeded to establish friendly relations with the Church. Every proclamation breathed peace and good will, and this pacific attitude was strengthened by the presence of Nicholas P. Trist, an accredited peace commissioner. Even Taylor's victories and the capture of Vera Cruz had worked no change in Polk's "olive branch" policy, and Trist's mission afforded the rare spectacle of conquering invaders begging peace and offering millions for it. In his letter of instructions, dated April 15th,<sup>2</sup> Secretary of State Buchanan offered to pay fifteen million dollars for an amicable settlement, and in the event that he could gain the right of transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, thirty million dollars was to be offered. Nor was formality of any kind to stand in the way of peace, for Buchanan said:

So rapidly does revolution follow revolution in Mexico, that it would be difficult to conjecture what form of government you may find in existence over that ill-fated country on your arrival at the headquarters of the army. The constitution of 1824 may then have been abolished, and a dictatorship be again existing in its stead. You will not hesitate, however, to conclude a treaty with whatever government you shall find there upon your arrival, provided it presents a reasonable prospect of being able to maintain itself. Should a dictator be established who has subverted the constitution of 1824, and acquired the supreme power, his ratification of the treaty will be sufficient without the previous approbation of the general Congress. Were this government to refuse to conclude a treaty of peace until the Mexican government shall assume any permanent constitutional form, the war might yet continue for many years to come.

<sup>2</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 69, 30th Congress, 1st Session, vol. 8.

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Here again was Mexico's golden opportunity, but a dread of Santa Anna—the conviction that he would use the money to consolidate his evil power—raised a storm of popular feeling against the proposals. After weeks of noisy debate, Congress refused to receive Trist, and on April 20th even enjoined the executive power from entering into peace discussion of any kind. Confronted at every turn by difficulties that chilled his mercurial temperament, the Dictator now gave serious consideration to betrayal. Establishing a secret contact, Santa Anna asked for one million dollars, but Trist, while willing to pay this amount for a *bona fide* treaty, would only hand over ten thousand dollars in advance. Shields and Quitman opposed these negotiations, holding it scandalous and humiliating to buy peace from a defeated foe, but Scott approved, on the ground that the offer, if corrupt, came from parties already corrupted, and that peace, however obtained, meant the saving of human life.<sup>3</sup> At the last moment, however, Santa Anna's courage failed him, for Valencia had stormed back from San Luis Potosí crying "Treason," and, pocketing the advance payment, he turned furiously to the work of defense. Strong fortifications were raised along every possible line of approach, an army of twenty-five thousand was assembled, munition factories worked day and night, a cowed clergy paraded the streets, and patriotism, flaming high in the hearts of the people, threw Buena Vista, Vera Cruz, and Cerro Gordo into the shadow.

Scott, quartered in Puebla, had received reënforcements which brought his army up to fourteen thousand, but of this number fully a fourth were on the sick list. To advance upon the City of Mexico with so small a force, with every certainty that his supply line would be cut, seemed a madness, and when he gave the order to march, on August 7th, foreign military experts regarded his doom as sealed. "Scott is lost!" exclaimed the Duke of Wellington. "He cannot capture the City and he cannot fall back upon his base." Imperturbably, even gayly, the Americans set forth for the "halls of the Montezumas," following the route taken by Cortes three hundred years before. The climb from Vera Cruz to Jalapa is one of the most beautiful ascents in the world, for it goes from the burning sands

<sup>3</sup> Scott's letter to Trist, July 17. (*Trist Papers*, Library of Congress.)

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of the seashore, through the flaming luxuriance of the tropics to fertile tablelands where snowcapped mountain peaks temper the sun's heat until the air is like gulps of wine. From Puebla to the City of Mexico is no less a delight, although there are now bare stretches instead of the forests that shaded the *conquistadores*. Some six miles out of Puebla still stands the great pyramid of Cholula, where Cortes killed and burned, and the road runs through a shining valley between the towering summits of Popocatepetl and Iztaccihuatl, their snowy peaks gleaming against the green of pine and fir.

On August 12th, the Americans looked down on the Valley of Mexico, jeweled with lakes, the great hill of Chapultepec standing in its center like some mighty sentinel, reaching their goal without having been once attacked. What Scott had counted upon was the incompetence of Santa Anna and his generals, and his faith received ample justification. Funds were stolen, munitions were not provided, and fortifications that might have stopped the American advance lacked artillery. The cavalry of Canalizo, delegated to harry the American rear, never made an attack; Isunza, Church-controlled Governor of Puebla, failed to furnish promised forces, and Valencia, the "ambitious, insubordinate sot," as Santa Anna called him, struck no blow at the American flanks.

As Scott halted at the Valley's edge, on his right were the salt waters of Lake Tezcoco, on his left the sweet waters of Lake Chalco, while the main route in between was guarded by natural fortifications which Santa Anna had made impregnable. After a calm survey of his problem, Scott suddenly plunged into the marshes, and waded his army twenty-five long, wet miles to San Augustín, a suburb ten miles south of the City. Once again the "accursed Yankees" had failed to conform to Santa Anna's wishes, and with his elaborate strongholds safely turned, he was compelled to dismantle them and form new battle plans entirely. Spurred by the menacing silence of the City, for charges of treachery were rife once more, the frenzied Dictator drove his men night and day, and at the end had reason to feel a sense of renewed safety.

Directly in front of Scott at San Augustín, between him and the City, stretched the *pedregal*, a vast lava bed, bleak, terrible and

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forbidding as any Dante conception. The one fair approach to the City was the Acapulco road, really a causeway, for it ran along marshy ground between the *pedregal* and Lake Chalco, and, fully convinced that Scott must choose this route, Santa Anna prepared it for defense with all the care of a hostess setting a table. At San Antonio, three miles from San Augustín, he fortified strongly, and where the highway crossed the Churubusco River, about two miles nearer the City, he made the convent of San Pablo a fortress, and turned the bridge-head into an equally strong defense. To make assurance doubly sure, Valencia and nine thousand men were ordered to Coyoacán, a mile west of Churubusco, with instructions to throw up works for the protection of the San Angel turnpike on its way to Tacubaya.

Reports soon convinced Scott that it was hopeless to advance by the Acapulco road, but Lee and Beauregard, returning from the left, told of paths zigzagging through the *pedregal* and striking the San Angel turnpike at Padierna, four miles away. On the morning of the 19th, therefore, Pillow and Twiggs were sent ahead to build a road, while Worth had his instructions to make threats against San Antonio. Valencia, for once, had a gleam of intelligence. Appreciating the fact that Scott might try to gain the San Angel pike, he left Coyoacán, marched down the highway through San Gerónimo to Padierna, and took up a new position in flat defiance of Santa Anna's orders. Exhausted by this mental strain, he planted himself on the side of a hill without any regard to the summit. Pillow, reaching a ridge in the *pedregal* at noon, looked down on Valencia's army and straightway thrilled at the thought of winning a hero's laurels. Confidently sending Colonel Riley's brigade to San Gerónimo "to cut off Valencia's retreat," he charged forward in all directions and met with a sickening repulse that scattered his command in isolated units.

Scott, coming to the scene, might well have fallen into despair, but with his usual imperturbability, he studied the field and decided upon San Gerónimo as the key to success. Riley's brigade, it was learned, had been joined by Smith's brigade, and to strengthen them, Shields' brigade was sent across the *pedregal* under cover of night. Santa Anna, rushing up from San Antonio, saw Valencia's

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danger and sent orders for an instant retreat, but that suppressed Cæsar, delirious with pride, returned an insulting answer, whereupon the raving Dictator rode back to quarter at San Angel for the night. As at Monterey, a furious storm beat down, but by midnight the Americans were massed at San Gerónimo—forty-two hundred in number—and Lee stumbled across the *pedregal* to ask Scott for a frontal attack at dawn. At three Smith whispered the word; at daybreak the unguarded summit in Valencia's rear had been gained; and seventeen minutes thereafter the astounded Mexicans were in full flight. Santa Anna, marching to the rescue shortly after seven, having decided upon Valencia's rescue, was met by streams of fugitives. Stunned, not knowing where to turn, the wretched man now lost his head completely and ordered the garrison at San Antonio to evacuate and join him at Churubusco. Rushing there himself with his entire army, he threw whole regiments into convent and bridge-head and breastworks, and took his own stand on the highway beyond the river.

Now came the American turn to blunder. Scott, joining Valencia's conquerors at San Angel, sent troops to Worth with orders to attack San Antonio, and hurried forward with his army to Churubusco. The engineers, carried away by the delirium of victory, took scarcely more than a squint at the convent and bridge-head, hidden by fields of waving corn, and Scott, deceived by their reports, ordered Twiggs and Pillow to advance. Rincón and Anaya, grim veterans, held their fire until the Americans were almost against their guns, and then shattered and scattered them. In the meantime Worth had come upon San Antonio just as the retreat commenced, and turning it into a mob flight, had followed at a double-quick down the causeway. Reaching the river, he stopped for no reconnaissance whatever, but plunged blindly forward, meeting a rain of lead from the bridge-head that threw him back in wild confusion, and covered the ground with his dead.

Shields and Franklin Pierce, crossing the river on the extreme left to cut off any Mexican retreat, ran squarely into Santa Anna's reserves, and in the face of deadly fire, the Americans broke and fell back, seeking cover wherever cover could be found. At two o'clock the battle seemed lost, but the fiery Worth, spurred by the fear

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that Twiggs, a hated rival, might be gaining glory, rallied his demoralized troops, crossed the river by a flanking movement and struck the bridge-head from the rear. Santa Anna, foolishly enough, had weakened this defense by taking away its best troops, and Worth's assault could not be checked. The full fury of the attack was now centered on the convent, but still Rincón and Anaya fought on. Even when the last gun was out of commission and not a cartridge remained, they refused to ask quarter, and it was an American who fluttered his handkerchief to stop the artillery. General Twiggs, seeing no ammunition when he took possession, asked where it was, and Anaya grimly answered, "If we had more, you would not be here." Even as the victors were laying joyous hands on the San Patricio battalion of American traitors,<sup>4</sup> Shields and Pierce took fresh heart and carried the highway, driving Santa Anna down the causeway to the City.

The two battles proved a blow more terrible than Buena Vista or Cerro Gordo. Of the thirty thousand men who had been at his command the night before, less than twenty thousand followed Santa Anna into the City. The landscape was black with his dead, close to three thousand of his best troops were prisoners, the bulk of his ordnance was in enemy hands, and worst of all, deserters carried a message of despair to the country. Against this somber total of ten thousand, Scott's loss for the day was 733 killed, 865 wounded and forty missing.

<sup>4</sup> Although the army clamored for their instant execution, Scott gave fair trials to all. Some were shot, some were branded, and many escaped on technical pleas.

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EVERY road into the City was open to the Americans, yet in the hour when the glory of a triumphant entry awaited him, Scott laid down the sword and accepted the olive branch, granting Santa Anna's request for an armistice. Now boldly declaring for peace, the Dictator appointed a representative commission, headed by ex-President Herrera, but the conferences that began on the 27th soon reached an *impasse*. Congress would not assemble; and Valencia was in open revolt, supported by Olagüibel, Governor of the State of Mexico, an honest man ready to form any alliance out of his distrust of Santa Anna. Paredes, returning from exile in August; Almonte, out of prison, and Canalizo, out of favor, constituted still another cabal. Trist's statement of the American terms was explicit—the Rio Grande as the Texas boundary, and cession of New Mexico and California—but he stood willing to make a large money payment. The very mention of land-cession, however, brought a fury of reproach from Santa Anna's enemies, and out of his indecision, the half-crazy creature determined to risk a last toss of the dice. He knew that Scott's little army had received no reënforcements and was without supplies, and on September 6th, he terminated the armistice abruptly and moved troops from the City to the remaining outer defences.<sup>1</sup> Three hundred feet above the plain towered the great hill of Chapultepec, crowned by its castle. Close by were the stone structures of El Molino del Rey and Casa Mata, heavily fortified, and in a terrain made defensively strong by protecting ditches and ravines. Scourged by accusations of treason, the clergy urged the people to exterminate the heretic and paraded the Virgin of Guadalupe

<sup>1</sup> "They [the Mexicans] commenced preparations for the defense without giving notice of the termination of the armistice." Grant's *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 148.

Even Bancroft admits that Scott was "duped," and that Santa Anna was steadily "infringing the terms of the armistice by strengthening fortifications of the city, calling in troops and organizing fresh forces." *History of Mexico*, vol. 13, p. 496. In the same breath he insists that "the United States could have secured peace by ceasing to assail the Mexicans who were fighting only in self-defense." p. 547.

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through the streets. Santa Anna's forces numbered eighteen thousand as opposed to Scott's army of eight thousand, and confidence returned to thrill the heart of the Master Gambler.

On September 7th, Scott deceived Santa Anna, as usual, by a feint, and on the morning of the 8th, advanced Worth against Casa Mata and El Molino. Here was Scott himself deceived, believing that the two buildings were gun factories, and assuming, on equal misinformation, that they would be easy of capture. As a further misfortune, Worth let the infantry charge without waiting for the artillery to breach the walls, and not only was the attack decisively repulsed, but from El Molino came a counter-charge that scattered the Americans in wild disorder. Reënforcements were ordered up, and in hand-to-hand fighting, General Antonio León, Lucas Balderas, and the bravest of the Mexican leaders fell at the head of their men. The defense of Casa Mata was no less stubborn and heroic, for time after time Pérez and his gallant men beat back the assault, even leaping the walls to inflict greater damage upon the demoralized Americans. Scott, coming upon the scene, put a stop to stupidity by ordering bombardment, and as Casa Mata did not have a single piece of artillery, the garrison was soon driven into retreat.

These mistakes of the Americans were saved from evil consequences by the incompetence of Santa Anna and the failure of General Álvarez. Deceived by Scott's feint against the southern gates of the City, the President had hurried the majority of his men to a point two hours away, while Álvarez, ordered to attack with his four thousand cavalry, sat idle until the Americans had captured both El Molino and Casa Mata. Scott, therefore, was able to meet the belated cavalry charge with his full force and all of his artillery. Naturally, Álvarez and his men fell back before the hail of lead, and the day was lost. Had Santa Anna kept his army together, instead of diverting divisions on a wild goose chase, or had Álvarez charged when the Americans were engaged in assailing El Molino and Casa Mata, Scott would have been annihilated. Instead of that, Mexican morale was shattered by another defeat which cost two thousand lives, seven thousand prisoners, and the irreparable loss of the heroic León. The American loss was 124 killed and 582

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wounded, a blow indeed to a small army in the heart of enemy country, and, to make matters worse, Worth excused himself by open and bitter criticism of his commander.

Learning caution, Scott now considered his approach more carefully, for with only seven thousand effectives left, another mistake might well prove fatal. Two possible approaches to the City presented themselves—San Cosme and Belen, portals on the west, and the gateways of Nino Perdido, San Antonio, and La Viga on the south. Chapultepec guarded the San Cosme and Belen approaches, and confident in the strength of the castle-crowned mount, Santa Anna had devoted all attention to the southern portals. Weighing every consideration, Scott decided upon the unexpected, and after feinting against San Antonio the afternoon and night of the 11th, on the morning of the 12th he threw his men against Chapultepec.

This battle, more than any other, lingers in Mexican memory as a source of bitterness, for among the defenders were young military students. Americans visiting Mexico to-day are shown Chapultepec with an effect of accusation, much as though Scott and his army accomplished their conquest by the daily murder of mere boys. At no point does there seem to be any realization of the fact that the very presence of these lads at a vital point of attack constituted a savage indictment of the national defense. Two miles away was a city of two hundred thousand people, capital of a country with a population of seven million, and directly at hand was an army of twenty thousand. How, then, was it possible for Scott to assume that Chapultepec, key to the Capital, would be intrusted to the keeping of cadets? As a matter of fact, the garrison numbered 832 veterans, and that more soldiers had not been provided for the defense was entirely the fault of Santa Anna, too stupid at first to discern Scott's tactics, and too cowardly at the last to lead a rescue party.<sup>2</sup>

Certainly Scott had no idea of the true situation, and as his little

<sup>2</sup> In the closing months of the Civil War, a battalion of boys from 14 to 20 years of age were ordered from the Virginia Military Institute to join General Breckinridge at New Market. Taking their place in the battle line after a three days' march, they held their position under heavy artillery fire and against infantry attacks, and at a decisive moment charged across a wheat field, broke the Federal line, and turned defeat into victory.

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army looked at the forest-girdled height, crowned by its massive castle, even so brave a soldier as General Worth murmured to his aide, "We shall be defeated." All day the American artillery rained lead on the summit, but when an assault was ordered the following morning, the undertaking was deemed so desperate that volunteers were asked. Commencing at daybreak, two hours of terrific cannonading preceded the assault, and as a sudden silence fell, Worth's and Pillow's divisions sprang forward up the steep slope. Through the mournful cypress groves where Montezuma loved to wander and over breastworks, swept the storming party, but coming to the walls they found that the expected ladders were not at hand. Mines were under them and all about them, and extermination seemed certain, but like everything else connected with Santa Anna's military preparations, the mines were faulty and failed to explode.

Quitman, circling the hill to strike at Belen causeway, was beaten back by Rangel's fierce gun-fire, and Smith, charging through the meadows, met a similar repulse. For a moment victory hung in the balance, but Worth's men continued to climb,—Pickett waving the colors,—at last the ladders arrived, hand-to-hand fighting carried the parapet, and at half past nine, Nicolas Bravo, whose courage condoned many past offenses, handed over his sword. Deceived by Scott's feints, as at El Molino, Santa Anna was busy fortifying the southern portals of the City when Chapultepec was first attacked, and throughout the assault hovered near without courage to go to the relief, or intelligence to send strong reënforcements until too late.

No sooner had the fortress fallen than Quitman, without waiting for orders, was out on Belen causeway, racing to the City. Scott well knew that this portal was strongly fortified, and had planned no more than a feint against it, intending to strike at the San Cosme portal, strangely neglected by Santa Anna. The insubordinate Quitman fared badly at the Belen gate, and would have fared worse had not General Terres run out of ammunition, compelling a retreat to the Citadel. Even so, Santa Anna appeared with a strong force, and as evening came on, Quitman's own ammunition failed, leaving him surrounded and virtually defenseless.

Scott, meanwhile, had followed out his original plan, and after

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beating Rangel into retreat, sent Worth down Veronica causeway against the San Cosme portal. Here Peña and Rangel improvised a brilliant defense, but Scott's artillery fire dismantled the Mexican guns, Rangel fell, and flanking parties, burrowing through walls, gained housetops at the rear and poured down deadly volleys. The luckless Santa Anna, rushing up from Belen, where Quitman was at his mercy, arrived just in time to be swept away by San Cosme's retreating defenders. Late that night, the crushed commander assembled his remaining troops and slipped quietly out of the City to Guadalupe. At dawn, the City Council flew a white flag at Belen portal, Quitman marched in and Scott followed in formal occupation.

Santa Anna's last act had been to open the jails,<sup>3</sup> and from these ragged skulkers came a shot that turned the chill, silent procedure into a bedlam. Acting swiftly, Scott swept the streets with shot, riflemen cleared the housetops, the city authorities ran furiously about in an effort to restore order, and by dark the whole affair had ended with the same suddenness that marked its beginning.<sup>4</sup> Lured by the uproar, Santa Anna crept close to the City walls, but after hovering around for a few days, *á la* Micawber, moved off to Puebla in the despairing hope that he might be able to capture that city and cut Scott's supply line. Six thousand men were finally assembled for the attack, while the American garrison was less than six hundred, but an utter absence of faith in Santa Anna's leadership, as well as lack of artillery, forced the assault to degenerate into a siege. On October 12th, General Lane and three thousand of Taylor's army marched in from Vera Cruz, and when an attempt at ambush failed miserably, the Napoleon of the Western World drifted away toward Oaxaca, where resolute Governor Juárez barred his entry.

In the absence of any legal successor to the presidency, Manuel Peña y Peña, old and ill, was drawn from his retirement on Sep-

<sup>3</sup> "He [Santa Anna] liberated all the convicts confined in the town." Grant's *Memoirs*, p. 159.

<sup>4</sup> Despite these undisputed facts, Gustavo Baz, in his *Life of Juárez*, p. 51, says: "The inhabitants of Mexico City fought the invading army for three days in the streets and plazas, and from the roofs and balconies of the houses, without receiving any assistance from Santa Anna, who was encamped with his army at Guadalupe Hidalgo, only three miles distant. An attack at this moment might have changed the entire aspect of the war."

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tember 22d, setting up a skeleton government at Toluca that was soon removed to Queretaro. One of his first acts was to order the arrest of Santa Anna, but as usual, no punishment was meted out, and in January the sadly crumpled Napoleon left "his ungrateful country," sailing for Venezuela with his customary millions. As far as other effective action was concerned, Peña's hands were tied by an empty Treasury. The Church stood like iron against further gifts or loans, and Great Britain, who had advanced six hundred thousand dollars in exchange for the acknowledgment of certain bonds, besides paying two hundred thousand dollars and a royalty for a ten-year lease on the principal mint, was also firm in denying additional assistance. Out of widespread conviction that the money would be stolen or squandered, the people refused to pay taxes, house-to-house begging met with small response, the merchant class evaded forced loans, and even the states withheld remittances.

The north was fast in Taylor's grip, Scott held a firm line from the City to Vera Cruz, with reënforcements arriving regularly; all ports were occupied by Americans, and the Mexican navy—such as it was—had been sunk or burned to avoid capture. The central states talked openly of secession; rebellious Yucatan asked annexation by the United States, France, or England; and Campeche had also withdrawn from the Union. As for the army, General Herrera, put in charge of the national defense, resigned in disgust, for only the professional-soldier class remained, and these were scarcely more than brigands. Guerrilla warfare, instituted as a last flourish, soon proved more costly to Mexico than America. Canales and Urrea in the north, Rebolledo and Jarauta in Vera Cruz, and Rea in Puebla, all bushwhacked and murdered quite gayly for a time, but, taught a lesson by various encounters, they quickly learned to avoid the Americans and preyed exclusively upon the helplessness of their own people, seizing state funds, robbing churches, pillaging *haciendas* and spreading ruin wherever they went.

Faced by these conditions, not one of which had any possibility of improvement, and realizing that their continuance meant national disintegration, Peña decided upon peace. Herrera, Juárez, Ocampo, Olaguibel, Anaya and other sane leaders supported him, and the return of Paredes, together with the known activities of

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Alamán, Almonte and other monarchists, brought many Liberals into line. Congress, meeting November 2d, voted down General Otero's motion to forbid any cession of territory, and on the 11th General Anaya was elected President *ad interim*, a decisive victory which eliminated Almonte as a political figure. The executives of Michoacán, Zacatecas, Queretaro, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Puebla further strengthened the provisional government by declaring for peace, and Peña, appointed Secretary of Foreign Relations, acquainted Trist with his wish to open negotiations. Meeting with cordial agreement, he named a commission consisting of Luis Cuevas, many times Secretary of Foreign Relations, and Bernardo Couto and Miguel Atristrain, acknowledgedly the country's greatest lawyers. On November 16th, however, just as parleys were being arranged, Trist received the stunning news of his recall. Polk had not liked the August armistice, regarding it as evidence of weakness on Scott's part, and moreover he was deeply angered by the false report that Trist had agreed to a Texas boundary other than the Rio Grande. To quote from Buchanan's letter, written October 6:

After a series of brilliant victories, when our troops were at the gate of the capital, and it was completely in our power, the Mexican government have not only rejected your liberal offers, but have insulted our country by proposing terms the acceptance of which would degrade us in the eyes of the world, and be justly condemned by the whole American people. They must attribute our liberality to fear, or they must take courage from our supposed political divisions. Some such cause is necessary to account for their strange infatuation. In this state of affairs, the President, believing that your continued presence with the army can be productive of no good, but may do much harm by encouraging the delusive hopes and false impressions of the Mexicans, has directed me to recall you from your mission, and to instruct you to return to the United States by the first safe opportunity. He has determined not to make another offer to treat with the Mexican government, though he will always be ready to receive and consider their proposals. They must now first sue for peace.

For a moment the whole question of peace hung in the balance, and then Trist, a mild, sheep-faced man who had never been more than a chief clerk, made a decision remarkable for its sheer moral

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courage. Believing that the pending negotiations contained the one hope of settlement, and convinced that Polk did not understand the changed situation, he ignored his recall, braving disgrace if not actual ruin. The British government's formal announcement that it would not assist Mexico with either men or money, and Scott's orders to resume military activities, further strengthened the peace party. On January 8th, Anaya's term expired by limitation and as Congress was not in session another halt seemed inevitable, but the difficulty was met by Peña's return to office as provisional president. On February 2, 1848, a treaty was signed at Guadalupe Hidalgo confirming the title of the United States to Texas, Upper California and New Mexico, a sweep of territory out of which Arizona, Nevada and Utah were also carved at a later time. In return for permanent and peaceful acceptance of American ownership, the United States agreed to pay fifteen million dollars and to assume Mexico's obligations in the matter of her unsettled claims, the total of \$20,298,000 —being five million dollars in excess of the price paid for the Louisiana Purchase.

In no sense was the treaty a "sale" of territory. For nine years Texas had made good her claim clear to the banks of the Rio Grande and the clean-cut military conquest of both New Mexico and California had been completed in the summer of 1846. Moreover, as has been shown, Mexico had never really possessed either province, and her sporadic attempts at subordination were as expensive as they were disastrous. As a matter of fact, the only "surrender" was made by the United States. The states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, Tamaulipas, Puebla, and Vera Cruz, and the Capital itself, were in the iron grip of the Americans, and their navy occupied the ports of Vera Cruz, Tampico, Mazatlán, Guaymas, Manzanillo, Tuxpan, and San Juan Bautista. Europe had no other idea than that America would keep the three northern states, since Mexico could pay no cash indemnity, and the French even assumed that Polk would regard the whole of Mexico as proper spoils of war. Instead of which, the treaty turned back ports and states and not only waived indemnity, but actually gave a princely sum to Mexico for her rehabilitation and good will.

Nor was it a "treaty of conquest." Five months before the firing

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of the first shot, it was in the power of Mexico to have made peace by simple acceptance of the *fact of annexation*—a peace which would have given her millions and saved her the whole of New Mexico and California. Polk, through Slidell, begged acceptance, and again in April, 1847, Trist came with terms that might have been proposed by a defeated nation to its victor. It was not until Mexico rejected these and other overtures contemptuously, repeatedly, that the United States resolved upon the retention of part of the captured territory. To quote the emphatic words of Trist during the negotiations, ". . . if by conquest be meant the retention of territory which a neighbor, by forcing you into a war, has compelled you to occupy after every possible means has been exhausted by you to preserve peace and to avoid that necessity—if this be the sense attached to the words, then the title by conquest is one which any member of the great family of nations may appeal to, in the certainty that it will be pronounced good by the tribunal to which they are all alike amenable."

Polk, upon receiving the treaty, had his moment of fury against Trist, but for all his prejudices he was an honest man, and saw that the document, however framed, still embodied the terms that he himself had set down. On February 23d, therefore, he sent it to the Senate, expressing both approval and resentment in this paragraph:

It was not expected that Mr. Trist would remain in Mexico, or continue in the exercise of the functions of the office of commissioner, after he received his letter of recall. He has, however, done so, and the plenipotentiaries of the government of Mexico, with a knowledge of the fact, have concluded with him this treaty. I have examined it with a full sense of the extraneous circumstances attending its conclusion and signature, which might be objected to; but, conforming, as it does substantially, on the main questions of boundary and indemnity, to the terms which our commissioner, when he left the United States in April last, was authorized to offer, and animated, as I am, by the spirit which has governed all my official conduct towards Mexico, I have felt it to be my duty to submit it to the Senate for their consideration, with a view to its ratification.

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After bitter debate, ratification was given on March 10th, but as some amendments were made, Senator Sevier and Attorney General Clifford were appointed as commissioners for their explanation. The Mexican Congress convened in May, after public subscription had raised money for the traveling expenses of the impoverished members, and straightway the Santa Anna, Almonte, Alamán and Paredes groups began to scream in defense of "the nation's honor." Carefully, brilliantly, Peña explained the treaty as the one hope of national life, stating that the terms were far more generous than had been dreamed,<sup>5</sup> and then, in words that cut like whips, he denounced his opponents as the authors of Mexico's ruin. Firm indeed was the ground on which he stood. It had been in Herrera's power to avert the annexation of Texas by acknowledgment of Texas' independence, and they had deposed him. With Slidell begging peace, Paredes could have prevented conflict, sparing the country humiliation and disaster, but he had cried aloud for a "glorious and necessary war." There had been no lack of patriotism and bravery on the part of the people—Scott and Taylor alike attested to the dauntless courage of the Mexican soldier—but valor had been led to death by cowardice and incompetence, and even robbed of proper weapons by gross and continuous corruption. Of the men who stood before him, shouting against peace, many were smeared with the treason of monarchical designs, and there were few whose pockets did not bulge with stolen money stained with their country's blood. These bitter truths beat down opposition, and on May 19th the Chamber of Deputies approved the treaty by 51 to 35, and the Senate ratified 33 to 4.

The evacuation of Mexico commenced at once; on June 12th all troops left the City and by July 30th the last American had put San Juan de Ulua behind him. Grant may have been in error when he wrote that the people regretted "our departure as much as they had regretted our coming," but there can be no question that a vastly

<sup>5</sup> "It is to the credit of the American nation, however, that after conquering Mexico, and while practically holding the country in our possession, so that we could have retained the whole of it, or made any terms we chose, we paid a round sum for the additional territory taken; more than it was worth, or was likely to be, to Mexico." Grant's *Memoirs*, vol. 1, p. 55.

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better feeling had been engendered. Many lies have been written about the American occupation—the modern Mexican looks upon it as a saturnalia—but Scott was well within his rights when he said that his men had shown “the highest moral deportment and discipline ever known in an invading army.” There can be no minimization of the crime and rapine in Matamoros, Tampico, and other northern points under Taylor, nor can the barbarities of Canales and Urrea be urged as an excuse. Wool, however, restored peace, law and order, and these were conditions that obtained under Scott from the first.<sup>6</sup> Labor and goods were paid for in cash, looting was punished instantly and sternly, property damages were compensated and the culprits imprisoned, military police patrolled the streets of cities night and day, municipal administrations were reformed and sanitary measures introduced.

<sup>6</sup> Poor Scott! General Pillow, Polk’s law partner, intrigued against his commander from the first, aided by the ambitious Worth and chuckle-headed Duncan. When Scott finally ordered their arrest, he himself was relieved of command on January 13, 1848, and forced to submit to a humiliating “inquiry” at the hands of subordinates. “Turned out as an old horse to die!” cried Robert E. Lee in a burst of natural bitterness.

## 19: Poisoning the Wells

**T**his is now necessary, in the interest of a thoroughly cleansed record, to make a study of American politics throughout the war period, tracing historic lies from inception to acceptance. In the first days of the conflict, when states actually fought over the privilege of contributing volunteers, and Taylor's victories aroused popular enthusiasm to fever pitch, the Whigs had raised small protest, voting men and supplies as loudly as the Democrats. The armistice which followed the capture of Monterey, and a creeping conviction that the war would be long and costly, chilled public ardor noticeably, however, and the unhappy opposition leaped forward instantly to take advantage of popular reaction. Many causes contributed to the fury of partisanship that now swept away all pretense of patriotism, dragging politics and politicians into new and deeper wallows than had yet been known. The Whigs, inheriting the Federalist traditions, were controlled by the high tariff manufacturers of New England and the Atlantic seaboard, and Polk had reduced duties almost to the point of free trade. This, and other measures designed to curtail special privileges, made him a man to be feared and destroyed, and word went out to bring about his destruction no matter what the means.

The Democrats not only offered no resistance to the attack but even joined in it. Polk had not been the real choice of his party, and patronage squabbles added fuel to fierce factional disputes. Moreover, he had handed the high military commands to Taylor, Scott, and Kearny, all Whigs, instead of giving "good Democrats" the privilege of honor and glory. Van Buren sulked in his tent, the arrogant Benton obstructed, and Calhoun, opposed to the war in the beginning, was now embittered by his exclusion from the Cabinet. The South, resenting the Northern charge that "slavery" was responsible for the conflict, drew more and more into itself, and the West, furious against Polk for his alleged surrender in the Oregon dispute, deserted *en masse* and joined the attack. To make

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matters worse, all of these differing antagonisms were drawn together by a common bond of rage and hatred when Polk vetoed the rivers and harbors bill, a peculiarly barefaced raid upon the public treasury. Abandoned, betrayed, the luckless President—reserved, colorless, entirely lacking in every pictorial value—was without ability to reach the people with a cry for help.

The leaders of the sudden and furious opposition were Henry Clay and Daniel Webster, rival candidates for the Whig presidential nomination. Both were committed to Polk's policy by acts and words of record, but both recanted and led in the subordination of patriotism to partisanship. Clay, in particular, had always been an expansionist. In 1810 he had defended Madison for seizing Spanish territory east of the Mississippi to the Perdido River, now the line between Florida and Alabama, and hopefully clamored for the seizure of Florida and even of Canada. In 1818 and again in 1820, when their success seemed only probable, he had demanded that the United States recognize the South American republics, even at the risk of war with Spain. In 1819, he fought the treaty with Spain furiously, declaring it nonsense to pay five million dollars for Florida. "It will come to us," he said, "the ripened fruit will not more surely fall." It was from his pen that Poinsett received instructions to buy Texas in 1825, and in 1836 he was the first to propose the recognition of Texas the moment proof was received that it had "in successful operation a civil government."

Webster, like Clay, had figured in the negotiations for the purchase of Texas, and in his correspondence with Bocanegra had upheld Texas independence and the sovereign right of the republic to deal with her future as she pleased. It is true that he had fought annexation, but only on the ground that there was "no power in any branch of the government, or all of its branches, to annex foreign territory to this Union," words which were robbed of honesty by the fact that he had concurred in the purchase of Florida and Louisiana, and, like Clay, had given Poinsett instructions to buy Texas. Even during the December debates on annexation, he went no further than to claim that "government would be endangered by further extension" and that Texas "would derange the balances of the Constitution." Moreover, if it *was* to be brought in, the proper

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way was not by joint resolution but by "diplomatic arrangement sanctioned by treaty." His state of mind at the time is amply attested by the following letter to his son, Fletcher, under date of March 11, 1845:

The Secretary of State yesterday wrote a mild and conciliatory letter to General Almonte in answer to his "protest." The substance of it is, that the annexation of Texas is a thing done, that it is too late for a formal protest to have any effect, that Mexico has no right to complain of such a transaction between independent states, that the government of the United States respects all the just rights of Mexico and hopes to bring all questions pending with her to a fair and friendly settlement. . . . That Mr. Polk and his cabinet will desire to keep the peace there is no doubt. The responsibility of having provoked war, by their scheme of annexation, is what they would greatly dread.

Nor do I believe that the principal nations of Europe, nor any of them, will instigate Mexico to war. The policy of England is undoubtedly pacific. She cannot want Texas herself and though her desire would be to see that country independent, yet it is not a point she would seek to carry by disturbing the peace of the world. But she will, doubtless now, take care that Mexico shall not cede California, or any part thereof to us. You know my opinion to have been and it now is that the port of San Francisco would be twenty times as valuable to us as all Texas. . . . I do not think that we should admit that under present circumstances Mexico can regard annexation as a just cause of war. Texas has been actually independent of Mexico for ten years. We have treated with her as an independent state, recognized her independence and made treaties, and carried on commerce with her in utter disregard of any claim of Mexico to exercise authority over her. For thus dealing with her revolted provinces, Mexico had a right to make war according to national usages if she had seen fit. But having omitted to do this and practically acquiesced in the recognition of Texan independence by the United States and other governments, and even made no attempt at reconquest for so many years, she can hardly say, I think, that an entirely new case has arisen by annexing Texas to the United States. I do not see that she had not as good a right to go to war, and indeed better, eight or ten years ago than she has now.<sup>1</sup>

When hostilities commenced, Webster led the mad clamor for the volunteer system that nearly lost the war, and even insisted with

<sup>1</sup> *Writings and Speeches of Daniel Webster*, vol. 2, p. 203.

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much passion that the enlisted men should have the right to choose their own officers. His sudden abomination of the war as a thing of evil involved as complete a right-about as the grimy history of politics affords, but what was one more recantation to a man who took pride in never paying a bill, and whose conception of honor was so individual that he would take fees from a client, as he did in the Dartmouth College case, and then desert to the opposition on the eve of trial? <sup>2</sup> With the ponderous dignity that was ever his great asset, Webster sounded the call to partisanship when he solemnly announced that: "In the dark and troubled night that is upon us there is no star above the horizon to give us a gleam of light excepting the intelligent, patriotic and united Whig Party of the United States." In his Faneuil Hall speech, November 6, 1846, he bitterly denounced Polk and the war, and declared the President guilty of "an impeachable offense," but had to admit that the people of Mexico were the "worst governed on the face of the earth," "subject wholly to military despotism," and that "Mexico has behaved most wrongfully to us. She has acted ruinously for her own interests, and injudiciously for her own character, in all respects."

Again, on September 29, 1847, speaking at Springfield, he attacked the struggle as a "war of pretexts," but had to admit that "after the battle of San Jacinto, in 1836, and the events of the next six or seven years, Mexico had no reason to regard Texas as one of her provinces. She had no power in Texas, but it was entirely at the disposition of those who lived in it. . . . I do not admit, therefore, that it was any just ground of complaint on the part of Mexico that the United States annexed Texas to themselves. But Mexico did take offense at the annexation. Long as Texas had been independent, notorious as was the fact that the governments of Europe as well as our own, had admitted the nationality of Texas, Mexico persisted in saying that it was her province." And yet though it stood clear that annexation was the cause of the war, and was Mexico's declared reason for waging it, he still persisted in hounding Polk as one who had plunged his country into a bloody strife out of a desire to serve the slave interests.

<sup>2</sup> Daniel Webster, by Henry Cabot Lodge, p. 77; also *Dartmouth College Cases*, by John M. Shirley.

## Poisoning the Wells

Under such inspirations, attack progressed from malignity to indecency. James Russell Lowell, poetically delightful but politically an ass, insisted that the South wanted California for slave territory and actually urged soldiers to desert.<sup>3</sup> In 1866, William H. Seward was to inform the French that the war with Mexico "was not made or sought by the United States, but was accepted by them under provocation of a very grave character." In 1847, however, he branded the conflict as "in the interest of an aristocracy of slaveholders." Calhoun, his long face gloomy, talked of "defeat by exhaustion," and joined with Webster to urge peace at any price, while Berrien, of Georgia, another "representative of the slave interests," hounded and obstructed.

The attack reached its culmination on February 11, 1847, in the speech of Senator Thomas Corwin, an Ohio demagogue of vast oratorical repute, who took the cautious insinuations of Webster and Clay and turned them into direct accusations. This creature had been foremost in war enthusiasm, voting for every bill giving money and supplies, but now he declared that Polk had "made war" on a neighboring republic "by bold usurpation of authority"; there was no difference between America and "the most odious, most hateful despotism"; every man at San Jacinto had but "recently" entered Texas, and "was fed by our people, and armed and equipped in the United States to do that very deed"; and after insistently alluding to the Mexicans as "Celts," he wound up by trusting that American soldiers would be "welcomed with bloody hands to hospitable graves."<sup>4</sup> It was too much, even for Whigs, and a swift-rising tide of furious indignation not only swept "Black Tom" into oblivion, but even silenced his associates for a while. By November, however, reaction was again triumphant, and Clay felt it safe to make a keynote speech in Lexington on the 13th with this as its principal paragraph:

If General Taylor had been permitted to remain where his own good sense prompted him to believe he ought to remain, at Corpus Christi, and if a negotiation had been opened with Mexico in a true

<sup>3</sup> The *Hosea Biglow Papers* are filled with threats of secession and appeals for desertion.

<sup>4</sup> *Life and Speeches of Thomas Corwin*, by Josiah Morrow, p. 277.

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spirit of amity and consideration, war, possibly, might have been averted. But instead of this peaceful and moderate course, while Mr. Slidell was bending his way to Mexico, with his diplomatic credentials, General Taylor was ordered to transport his cannon and plant them in a warlike attitude opposite to Matamoros on the east bank of the Rio Bravo, within the very disputed territory, the adjustment of which was to be Mr. Slidell's mission.

More downright lies were never packed in so few sentences. Taylor chafed incessantly against his "inaction" at Corpus Christi, and as for opening negotiations in "a true spirit of amity," what humbler, more apologetic language could have been used than Buchanan's instructions to Parrott and Slidell? General Taylor was not "ordered" to Matamoros, but selected that point in the independent exercise of his own judgment, nor was this movement "while Mr. Slidell was bending his way to Mexico." Slidell landed in Vera Cruz on November 30, and it was not until March 8 that Taylor left Corpus Christi.

Brazenly assuming that Polk planned the annexation of *all* Mexico, Mr. Clay proceeded to argue against it as passionately as though he believed his own buncombe. It was a physical impossibility to combine the two peoples! How were 9,000,000 Mexicans to be represented in the Congress of the United States? And had people stopped to consider that they would have to assume the \$70,000,000 national debt of Mexico? Slavery was ringingly denounced, but with the pious proviso that he did *not* "admit the necessity of an instantaneous reparation of that injustice," and after sympathetic reference to Ireland's fight for freedom, he opined that "Mexicans are probably of the same Celtic race."

At the close of the speech, prepared resolutions were adopted that gave rare examples of skillful straddling. Polk was denounced for having ordered Taylor's advance, a thoroughly "unconstitutional act," but "Congress, having by subsequent acts recognized the war thus brought into existence, the prosecution became thereby national." It was admitted that as Congress had made no declaration of objects, Polk had been left "to the guidance of his own judgment to prosecute it for such purposes and objects as he may deem the honor and interest of the nation to require," and it was resolved that,

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"considering the series of splendid and brilliant victories achieved by your brave armies and their gallant commander during the war with Mexico, unattended by a single reverse, the United States, without any danger of their honor suffering the slightest tarnish, can practice the virtues of moderation and magnanimity towards their discomfited foe."

Congress, meeting in December, put the capsheaf on this farrago, the House voting the war "unnecessary and unconstitutional" by 85 to 81, and then, in the same breath, defeating a motion to withdraw troops by a vote of 137 to 41. The first vote, together with the speeches of Clay and Webster, was duly reported in Mexico and came close to ending the peace negotiations. Almonte proclaimed them widely, insisting that a few more months of struggle would see the Whigs in power, when Mexico would have California, New Mexico, and Texas restored with full apologies.

The arrival of Trist's treaty gave the Whigs fresh opportunity to plumb the depths of political hypocrisy, for the very men who had been foremost in attacking the war as an "infamy," now rose to denounce the peace as a "betrayal." Dickinson of New York, Butler of Illinois and Hannegan of Indiana, led western senators in shouting for Mexico's annexation, and while New England kept the Whig leaders from going this far, they did berate the "surrender" of conquered territory, the refusal to demand indemnity, and the payment of millions for "nothing." Webster, in particular, added to his reputation for omniscience by declaring that the arid deserts and savage wastes of New Mexico and California defied human habitation and "were not worth a dollar," and actually proposed the appointment of three commissioners for the negotiation of a *new* treaty.<sup>5</sup> Better than any one he knew that it meant a renewal of war, but what were lives compared to the necessity of not letting Mr. Polk obtain any credit for peace? Like Mr. Webster, not a Whig senator had anything to offer but war, but public opinion, eager for peace, soon soothed the demagogues to silence, and ratification followed.

Even as Clay and Webster squared off to wrestle for the presi-

<sup>5</sup> Smith, *War with Mexico*, vol. 2, pp. 243-247, deals exhaustively with this opposition.

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dential nomination, confident that they had the arena to themselves, what was their horror to discover that the people had eyes only for "Old Rough and Ready"! Following immemorial example, therefore, the politicians turned away from their historic leaders, and at the Whig convention in June, even Kentucky deserted Clay. Taylor was nominated on the fourth ballot by this vote: Taylor 171, Clay 32, Scott 63, and Webster 14. Truly a startling reversal for a party that had so bitterly denounced slavery, the war and annexation, for not only was the nominee a slave-holder, and one who had steadfastly refused to say a word against slavery, but he was the man who, according to the original charge of the Whigs, had started the war. Moreover, he was an apostle of conquest, foremost in demanding the permanent retention of Chihuahua, Coahuila and Tamaulipas.

Now gayly preaching the conflict as a "work of justice," and a "brilliant achievement," the Whigs asked votes for "Old Rough and Ready" as one who had added a new luster to American glory, and such is the short memory of an electorate that Taylor won overwhelmingly. Polk, a great president in all that constitutes greatness, for he had given the country just laws, restored prosperity by a wise administration, avoided trouble with Europe by sound diplomacy, and won a war that he had tried his best to avert, was hurried into oblivion with none to do him justice. Clay, Corwin, and the other Whig orators never took the trouble to retract campaign falsehoods, and their orations, frankly recognized as political buncome at the time, became history, persisting to this day for the deception of Americans as well as Mexicans.

## 20: The Tragedy of Comonfort

ON May 30, 1848, General Herrera was elected to the presidency from which he had been deposed three years before for having dared to consider peace terms that would have averted war without loss of honor or territory. He faced a country bled white by bloodshed, famine and pestilence, and even as he addressed himself to these problems, Paredes "pronounced" in Guanajuato, unable to control his indignation against the "shameful treaty of Guadalupe." He was quickly defeated by citizen forces, but the only traitor shot for the uprising was Jarauta, the Carlist adventurer from Spain. No sooner had Paredes been permitted to leave the country than partisans of Santa Anna made an attack on Queretaro, led by Leonardo Márquez and Tomás Mejía, two professionalized soldiers who were to prove their country's scourges at a later day. They were beaten after some brisk fighting, but again Herrera was induced to observe the rules of Mexican revolution, and both were paroled.

These *cuartelazos* put down, an epidemic of cholera came upon the distressed country to complete the general misery and despair. Despite these heart-breaking obstacles, Herrera managed to restore some semblance of order and prosperity. The first telegraph line in Mexico was stretched between the Capital and Puebla, and in 1850 a London conference effected an arrangement of the foreign debt, finally fixing it at \$51,208,250. Arista, called to head the War Department, dismissed the thieves and incompetents, and with the menace of armed force removed, liberalism lifted its long-bowed head, and honest, patriotic men entered the public service. Sebastian and Miguel Lerdo de Tejada were distinguished acquisitions, but the great ray of light was the rise of two men—Benito Juárez, governor of Oaxaca, and Melchior Ocampo, governor of Michoacán—precursors of a new political order as rich in faith as the old was faithless. In their states they instituted equitable systems of taxation, established schools, and put the Church out of politics.

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At the close of Herrera's term, for the first time in the history of the Republic, the presidency passed to another by the peaceful process of an election. Almonte and Bravo were candidates, and even Paredes had the impudence to offer himself, but General Mariano Arista obtained a handsome majority, and took office January 15, 1851. The new head of government ranked deservedly as one of the most expert turncoats in public life, and his conduct at Palo Alto persisted as a shameful memory, but his administration of the War Department under Herrera had done much to wipe out an evil past. Whether the sight of his country's misery moved him to decency, or whether contact with Herrera had developed a moral sense, Arista bravely continued the work of reform, specifically with respect to the demobilization of the army and the elimination of professional office-holders.

Trouble with the United States seemed imminent for a while, on account of transit rights across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. Under the Treaty of Guadalupe, these rights were arranged for, but Mexico later made representation that she was bound in honor by certain grants that Santa Anna had awarded to British citizens in 1844. These British holders, however, made assignment to an American group, and as Herrera was decidedly in favor of the project, a treaty was made in 1850 which provided for the commencement and protection of the work. As Webster said in a letter of advocacy, Mexico was given "a practical highway from sea to sea," and "access to the markets of all nations . . . without expense to herself."

Arista, however, suddenly decided that the grant constituted a "judicial question" and hinted a fear that the Isthmus might go the way of Texas. Webster, highly indignant, replied that "there is not the slightest resemblance between the two cases and if the treaty were to go into operation there would not be, even if the Isthmus were conterminous with the United States territory, for the treaty would compel us to arrest by force, if necessary, not only the hostile designs of foreign powers upon the Isthmus, but such citizens of the United States as might be disposed to defy the sovereignty of Mexico." Again on August 25th, Webster so far forgot his loving attitude of 1847 as to use this language: "If, therefore, British subjects are allowed to hold the Tehuantepec privileges, and yet the

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same are sought to be annulled when citizens of the United States have become possessed by them . . . [it is] an odious and unjust discrimination against citizens of the United States which ought not to be acquiesced in by this government." Arista, persisting, expelled the American surveyors, but the United States took no action other than a formal protest.

All this while the privileged classes were viewing events with angry eyes. The sole purpose of the war had been to destroy the liberal movement, but instead of that it had restored Herrera, and now they saw Arista, once their tool, advocating the same dangerous ideas. Owing to the mistaken clemency of Herrera, proved traitors were alive and at large, the "generals" retired by Arista had small relish for civil life, and all the elements of greed and corruption, silenced by the war, were regaining ancient impudence. Alamán, the "man with the black brains," took up his monarchical plotting where he had left off in 1846, and the Church, niggardly enough when the country had been in peril, spared no money when its privileges were at stake. As a result of intrigue and plentifully supplied funds, 1852 witnessed a multitude of "pronouncements." The reliable Canales, hero of a hundred betrayals, rose in the north, Jalisco deposed its governor, and the climax came when General José López Uruga, sent to crush the rebels, himself "pronounced" and declared for Arista's expulsion. With this as a signal, the garrison rebelled in Vera Cruz under the leadership of Rebolledo, the ex-guerrilla, and this example was quickly followed in Mazatlán, Aguascalientes, and scores of other cities. Congress, a majority having been purchased, refused to grant Arista men or money for resistance, and he resigned on January 5, 1853.

Juan Bautista Ceballos, president of the Supreme Court, succeeded to the vacant seat, but all power rested in a joint committee of army officers and clerical dignitaries with Lucas Alamán as the guiding mind. As they fattened on the Church's bounty, swaggering away the unpleasant memories of 1846, the army regained much of its ancient spirit, and commenced to turn fond thoughts to the absent Santa Anna. Thief and traitor he was, but so were they all, and since no other leader evidenced any large degree of ingenuity in the important matter of pillage, "generals" and "colonels" yearned

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for the Master Rascal as the one man able to squeeze the last drop of profit from the rich opportunities that opened before them. When Ceballos named Colonel Manuel Robles Pezuela to negotiate with Uraga, the two agreed on the return of Santa Anna, and straightway Ceballos was kicked out of office and General Manuel María Lombardini put in pending the return of "The Napoleon of the Western World." It was not what the reactionaries had planned, by any means, but the attitude of the army left no alternative and Alamán was forced to make the best of a bad bargain. With the commission that sailed to Colombia to fetch Santa Anna, however, went this menacing letter:<sup>1</sup>

It is our will to sustain the ecclesiastical welfare with splendor and to arrange with the Pope everything relative to the ecclesiastical administration. We do not care, as some papers have said in order to discredit us, to establish the Inquisition nor religious persecution, but it is understood that the duty of the public authority is to prevent the circulation of impious books. . . . We are absolutely opposed to the federal system; to the representative system in the matter of elections which has obtained hitherto; and the elective city council [municipal home rule], and to everything that bears any relation to popular election. . . . We believe in the necessity of a new territorial division that will entirely extinguish and obliterate the present form of federal states. In order to facilitate good administration we believe it necessary that most drastic measure be taken to prevent the resprouting of the federal system. There will be an army of numbers competent for the needs of the country. . . . And we are persuaded that any and all of these things can be satisfactorily carried out without Congress. We desire, however, that you proceed under the counsel of a few advisers who will outline your executive action. Those are the essential points of our political faith. These we reveal to you frankly and loyally. We do not wish to conceal our opinions. Indeed in the propagation of these ideas we are supported by the general opinion, and by the newspapers in the capital and in the states which are all ours. We have the moral strength of the united clergy, and likewise of the land-owners. . . . For the rest we do not care, no matter what your personal convictions may be, to see you surrounded by flatterers who will influence you. . . . We are against your going to live in Tacubaya, because this will be a source of inconvenience to us in transaction of the gov-

<sup>1</sup> *The Mexican People*, by De Lara and Pinchon, p. 171.

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ernmental business; and we are against your usual leave of absence to go to your estate, Manga de Clavo, leaving the government in hands that will make the authority to be regarded with ridicule, and ending in your downfall, as has happened before. You are already possessed of our desires, of the strength and support which is ours and we presume you have the same ideas. If it should happen not to prove so, it will be bad for the nation—and bad for you. . . . Señor Haro will give you more detail in regard to these points and advising you to destroy this letter, and wishing you happiness, etc., I affirm myself to be your faithful and obedient servant.

LUCAS ALAMÁN.

This amazing document—enough in itself to damn the régime responsible for it—was accepted by Santa Anna unquestioningly, and when he took office on April 20th, it was under the authority of a supreme council consisting of twenty-one prelates and generals, with Alamán as Prime Minister, standing at his back to watch and direct. Straightway all the tyrannies of Centralism were restored: the army was increased to ninety thousand, and public opinion crushed by savage measures; one particular law, the infamous *Ley de Conspiradores*, providing that any citizen even suspected of conspiracy against either the Church or the government might be arrested summarily and tried without jury by military commanders, death, the penalty of conviction. Arista was exiled, Ocampo deposed and Juárez first arrested and then banished, only fear of civilized opinion saving the three from death.<sup>2</sup> It was as if Alamán realized that the sands of his life were running low, and gathered his force for one mighty assault upon the democracy that he loathed, hoping to work such absolute destruction that all possibility of popular resistance—even the dream of it—might be crushed. He died on June 2d, even as Gutiérrez Estrada wrote from Spain that things were going well with the plan to send over a Spanish prince to sit on a Mexican throne.<sup>3</sup>

Alamán was the one man that Santa Anna feared, and with him gone he gave rein to every vicious impulse. He was now fifty-eight

<sup>2</sup> The spirit behind this savagery is best explained by Theodor Mommsen in his *Roman History*, where he deals with the return of the Senate oligarchy after the fall of the younger Gracchus, calling it “the curse of restoration.”

<sup>3</sup> Zamacois, vol. 13, p. 672.

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years old, and whether he felt that it was his last fling with the dice, or whether vice and drugs joined to overturn a mind never stable at best, the results were the same. Plundering right and left, selling privileges to the highest bidder, confiscating the estates of all who displeased him, he took unto himself the title of Serene Highness, and issued a proclamation extending his dictatorship indefinitely. The shade of Iturbide was exalted; the memories of Hidalgo and Morelos degraded; and, reviving the Order of Guadalupe, he dismissed Ceballos and Castañeda from the Supreme Court when they dared to refuse his jeweled decorations. Liberals were hunted down with the utmost savagery, and to crown all, the Supreme Council of State ordered that "not only were individuals to be punished for expressing an opinion against the Government, but the towns in which these rebels were living were to be destroyed by fire and their inhabitants to be shot in groups."<sup>4</sup> Domestic pillage proving inadequate for his wild extravagances, he entered into negotiations with the United States, and on January 3, 1854, the Gadsden Purchase gave him ten million dollars for a disputed strip bordering on Arizona and New Mexico, not a cent reaching the Treasury of Mexico.

In the night that enveloped the unhappy land shone no star of hope. Divided by deserts and mountain ranges, ground down by garrisons—starved, unarmed—the people seemed without power even to struggle. In New Orleans, however, Juárez and Ocampo worked and dreamed, and their burning inspiration kindled some spark of the old patriotic fire in the breast of Juan Álvarez. This aged chieftain, seventy-four years old, had been little more than a marauder for years, but in his youth he had fought under Hidalgo and Morelos, and these dormant memories now came to life. In February he raised the banner of revolt in Guerrero, and Ignacio Comonfort, a man of wealth and culture, holding high position in Acapulco, joined the insurgents, bringing others willing to die rather than live in shame.

On March 1st the famous Plan of Ayutla proclaimed Mexico to be "one, indivisible and independent," and called for the election

<sup>4</sup> *Méjico á través de los Siglos*, vol. 4, p. 850; and Leon, *Historia de Méjico*, p. 428.

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of a Congress "and the restoration of a republican form of government." Here was to be no *cuartelazo*, the mean revolt of corrupt mercenaries, but a revolution of the whole people even as that of 1810. From state to state flew the news, and as fast as Santa Anna crushed it in one city, it flamed up in another, each day seeing an increased unification and larger understanding. Santos Degollado in Michoacán, Ignacio Llave in Vera Cruz, Santiago Vidaurri in Nuevo León, Ignacio Pesqueira in Sonora—new names and a new faith—and when Juárez and Ocampo returned bringing money and supplies, the insurgents were sufficiently powerful to defeat Santa Anna in pitched battles. Felix Zuloaga, his pet general, was captured by Comonfort, the cities of the south surrendered one after another, and as in the days of Hidalgo, whole populations left their towns and streamed over mountain and plain to strike a blow for liberty.

Beaten back to the City—spent, broken, and seeing death in the eyes of the wretches about him—Santa Anna looted the Treasury and slipped away to Vera Cruz. His luck still holding, he managed to get aboard a ship and gain his estates on the island of St. Thomas. August 13th is the day that Mexico should celebrate, rather than the 16th of September, for the date marks Santa Anna's final elimination after thirty evil years that wasted a country, corrupted its politics, and debauched its moral and spiritual values.

Not even the Cabinet had received intimation of the Dictator's flight, but the leaders, quickly adapting themselves to circumstances, called a convention and named General Martín Carrera president *ad interim*. The Plan of Ayutla was approved and General Díaz de la Vega and his garrison led all the rest in pledging eternal fealty to every principle of revolution. The insurgents, however, refused to be fooled, and Carrera, bowing to the inevitable, resigned in November and let Alvarez enter the Capital without resistance. Named provisional president by an assembly of delegates from the various states, "Tío Juan" appointed a cabinet with Comonfort as Minister of War; Ocampo, Minister of Foreign Relations; Guillermo Prieto, Minister of the Treasury; and Juárez, Minister of Justice.

The first meetings, however, disclosed sharp division. Juárez and

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Ocampo were for instant and vigorous procedure against every established evil, particularly the Church's privileges, while Comonfort, an insurgent by accident, held fast to the ancient stupidity that justice could be obtained by conciliation and negotiation. The illiterate Alvarez, impressed by Comonfort's suave manners and portly front, and only confused by the social and economic ideas of Juárez and Ocampo, gave his approval to policies of compromise, and Ocampo resigned in disgust. Juárez stayed on, for his Indian patience made him refuse to abandon hope until hopelessness stood proved. General Manuel Doblado and General Uraga—rebels for profit—"pronounced" for Comonfort in December, and Alvarez, dismayed as well as worn out by unaccustomed and uncongenial duties, resigned and named the amiable Comonfort as his substitute, a lack of judgment soon to prove fatal.

In addition to his fatuous belief that he could get the new without destroying the old, Comonfort carried the added disability of a fanatical mother who never ceased to regard Juárez as Satan's personal representative. Her confessor, Father Miranda, was the Church's principal agent, and while Comonfort refused to arrest the priest for his open plottings, he virtually exiled Juárez by appointing him governor of Oaxaca. This pathetic attempt at harmony, however, precipitated the very clash that he had hoped to avoid, for under orders from Archbishop Labastida, the clergy of Oaxaca organized armed resistance against Juárez, marching the streets with black flags labeled "Religion or Death." Moving with his usual force, Juárez organized the citizenry and after crushing the clerical revolt, made it clear that in Oaxaca, at least, Church and State were to be separated once and for all.

Each day saw Comonfort dragged deeper and deeper into the pit that his fatuity was at such pains to dig. While he alienated the Liberals by giving the chief army command to Zuloaga, that Santa Anna general whom he himself had taken in battle, and naming other reactionaries to high posts, he also angered the Conservatives by calling to the Cabinet Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, openly the champion of every Juárez-Ocampo reform. As Lerdo, resolute, dominating, drove forward with new laws, the Conservatives, as usual, turned to rebellion. In the early months of 1856, the rem-

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nants of the old Santa Anna army were organized under the leadership of two brilliant young captains—Luis Osollo and Miguel Miramón—and religious Puebla went over to the rebels without a struggle. Queretaro, another city of cathedrals, surrendered at the same time to Tomás Mejía, last heard of when he joined with Márquez to overthrow Herrera.

General after general, sent against the rebels, calmly deserted, and, spurred to energy by these treasons, Comonfort took the field himself at the head of an untrained citizen force of sixteen thousand. Puebla and Queretaro were recaptured in decisive battles, but lapsing into his usual indecision, the President pardoned the traitors instead of putting them before a firing-squad. Almonte and Uruga, equally involved, were given important foreign missions, and while thus embittering the Liberals, he proceeded to outrage the Conservatives by exiling Archbishop Labastida, proved head of the revolt, and compelling the Church to pay the costs of its abortive uprising.

At this moment there came one of those interludes that a kindly Providence sometimes offers when faith in human nature is at low ebb. With much beating of drums, a Spanish squadron anchored off Vera Cruz, bearing imperative demands for the payment of certain debts. As an inducement to Spain to lend him a prince, Alamán had recognized several long-standing claims, one for the cost of the Spanish campaigns against Hidalgo and Morelos, and another for certain Church estates confiscated in 1825, the whole totaling eight million dollars. It was with despair in his heart that Comonfort advanced proof of the utter dishonesty of the claims, but, lo and behold, Don Miguel de los Santos Álvarez, Spain's representative, happened to be a man of honor and ideals, and after thorough investigation agreed that the claims were indeed without justice. Begging the acceptance of his profound apologies, he left a stunned nation to pinch itself to see if it were really awake, and sailed home to demotion and disgrace.

Encouraged, perhaps, by this sign from Heaven, the Liberals drove ahead with new spirit, and piling up proofs of revolutionary activity against the Jesuits, forced Comonfort to agree to the expulsion of the order. Following this, Lerdo gained the passage

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of the famous law that ended the rule of the "dead hand," providing for the subdivision of the Church's vast rural holdings, and their sale on six per cent. mortgages. The bishops fulminated until the heavens rang; Osollo and Miramón rebelled again, and once more Comonfort crushed and paroled the rebels. The treasonable activities of the various convents in the City were so open and dangerous, however, that Juárez compelled a decree that razed the ancient home of the San Franciscans, running through its ruins the Avenue of the 16th of September.

All the while, Congressional committees had been at work on a constitution, and February 5, 1857, saw the document proclaimed to the world. After dividing government into executive, legislative, and judicial branches, the Constitution declared the rights of man to be the foundation and purpose of social institutions; established freedom of speech and press; ended imprisonment for debt, and all slavery—chattel and contract; affirmed the principle of free education; proclaimed the rights of petition and free assemblage; abolished *fueros* of every description and all private laws and special courts; reformed judicial procedure; and, after forbidding monastic orders, dealt further with the Church in these two articles:

Article XXVI. Private property shall not be taken without the consent of the owner, except in case of public utility, and by just payment therefor. Religious corporations or institutions, no matter of what denomination, character, durability or purpose, and civil corporations when under the patronage, direction, or superintendency of religious institutions, of ministers or any cult, shall not have the legal capacity to acquire or manage any real estate except the buildings which are used immediately and directly for the services of the said institutions; neither will the law recognize any mortgage on any property held by these institutions.

Article XXVIII. State and Church are independent. Congress cannot make any law establishing or forbidding any religion. . . .

Here was no more than a declaration of religious liberty and the separation of Church and State, yet straightway the hierarchy thundered against the "enemies of God," and Bishop Munguía of Michoacán and Bishop Reyero of Puebla even ordered the people

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to refuse obedience. All was of no avail. From town to town the Constitution was carried—in the villages it was read aloud until even the humblest peon came to glad understanding—and soon the wonder and glory of its promises lighted dark faces from Chihuahua to far Yucatan. When an election was held, Comonfort won the presidency, for he was looked upon as the Father of the Constitution, but Juárez was put at his right hand as head of the Supreme Court. At this moment came this message across the sea from Pope Pius IX:

Thus we make known to the faith in Mexico, and to the Catholic universe, that we energetically condemn every decree that the Mexican government has enacted against the Catholic religion, against the Church and her sacred ministers and pastors, against her laws, rights and property, and also against the authority of the Holy See. We raise Our Pontifical Voice with apostolic freedom before you to condemn, reprove, and declare null, void, and without any value, the said decrees, and all others which have been enacted by the civil authorities in such contempt of the ecclesiastical authority of this Holy See, and with such injury to the religion, to the sacred pastors, and illustrious men. For this we command that those who have contributed to the fulfillment of the said decrees by action, advice, or command shall seriously meditate upon the penalties and censures imposed by the apostolic constitutions, and by the canons of the councils against the violators of sacred persons and things, against the violators of the ecclesiastical liberty and power, and against the usurpers of the rights of this Holy See.<sup>5</sup>

There is no question that the Pope was deceived by reports from Mexico that painted Juárez as an infidel and anarchist, but the fact remains that the message was a command and full authority for rebellion. Now, as with one voice, the bishops issued orders forbidding "all faithful" to obey either the Constitution or to uphold the government responsible for it, promising excommunication as punishment for those guilty of disobedience. The Constitution was entirely the work of Juárez, Ocampo, and Lerdo, jammed through over Comonfort's protest, and as he listened to the Church's fury, the President was more than ever convinced that a terrible blunder had been made. In his inaugural address, therefore, he hinted that

<sup>5</sup> *Méjico á través de los Siglos*, vol. 5, p. 226.

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the Constitution "went too far," and might well be subjected to vital amendment.

Even as Juárez sent warning to Ocampo and other Liberals, the blow fell. Felix Zuloaga led the army in revolt, declaring that the Constitution must go, likewise Juárez, but announcing that Comonfort would be permitted to remain in office. The President's placid acceptance of this arrangement, together with his close relation to Zuloaga, made the Liberals realize that Comonfort had gone over to the enemy. More exact proof was soon given, for the President dissolved Congress at once and imprisoned Juárez. Within the week, however, Comonfort discovered that his rôle was that of a cat's-paw, the Conservatives planning to put Zuloaga in his place, but when he called upon the people to quell the uprising that he himself had countenanced, there was no answer. Such Liberals as were willing to brave the anger of the Church despised him, and the great mass of the population shrank back in terror as they heard mitered prelates threaten them with undying flames in an everlasting hell. Helpless, despairing, Comonfort fled the country, crying aloud in his anguish as he sailed from Vera Cruz, "I have been a good son but a bad patriot!"

On January 11, 1858, Zuloaga, once a *croupier*, assumed power as Provisional President, abolishing the Constitution, restoring the Church to its old power and former privileges, and duly receiving the blessings of Rome. "Beloved Son, Illustrious and Respectable Man, Greetings and Apostolic Blessings," wrote Pius IX, and described the consolation derived from hearing of the change in government and Zuloaga's desire to reestablish relations with this Holy See, and to work assiduously "that our Holy Religion may flourish in its height of power in Mexico according to the deep aspiration of all good Mexicans."<sup>6</sup> Taking the place left vacant by Alamán, subtle Father Miranda entered the Cabinet as Minister of Justice and Ecclesiastical Relations, the Church's agent and Zuloaga's master.

Comonfort's last act had been to free Juárez, but when he stretched out his hand in mute appeal for forgiveness, the grim Indian struck it down without a word. As head of the Supreme

<sup>6</sup> *Méjico á través de los Siglos*, vol. 5, p. 281.

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Court, and next in succession, Juárez advanced his proper claim to the presidency and fled to Guadalajara, where he set up a government with Ocampo and Guillermo Prieto as his chief advisers. When this word reached the Capital, it added to gayety rather than excited alarm. What was Juárez, after all, but an "ignorant Indian"? As for Ocampo, he was a madman, crazy enough to believe that the ignorant masses of Mexico were capable of self-government, and Prieto was known to be guilty of poetry. Against the rabble of "dreamers" and "demagogues" they complacently matched their own brilliant array of established personalities. While Zuloaga was contemptuously regarded as a tool, Osollo and Miramón were looked upon as invincible leaders, for despite their youth—both were under thirty—they had already given proof of military genius.

Miramón, of French descent, gay, intrepid, licentious, had been one of Chapultepec's student-defenders in 1847, while Osollo was a Spaniard of high type, allied with the Conservatives by reason of his honest belief that Mexico could not be ruled except by force. Only a little less admired than these two were Márquez and Mejía, no longer *guerrillas* but *generals*. While looked down on as an Indian, Mejía had shown courage and high military ability, and as for Márquez, although his vulpine face, scarred and brutalized, made him an unpleasant addition to refined circles, he brought to the cause all the ruthlessness and blood lust of a tiger. Added to this skilled direction, there was no lack of money or men. The Church opened its coffers, enlistment in the army became the fashion, every foreign power recognized the new régime, and feasts and *Te Deums* gave joy and color to the days.

## 21: Juárez and the Reform

JUDGED by the standards of any time or race, Benito Juárez is entitled to rank with the great of earth, not only by virtue of his achievements but equally by reason of his character.

Born amid squalor and ignorance, he drove upward against obstacles that seemed to defy human energy; moving among men to whom patriotism was no more than a cloak for evil ambition, love of country was an ideal he never soiled. Gripping a broken people between iron hands, he molded them to purpose and courage; lifting honor and faith from the mire of years, he raised them, cleansed them and held them high. Well indeed did Victor Hugo cry across the sea in 1867, "Mexico has been saved by a principle—a *man*. Thou art that man!" William H. Seward, an intellectual snob and always inclined to contemptuousness in his estimates, visited Mexico after his retirement as Secretary of State, and went on record with the assertion that Juárez was one of the most tremendous personalities he had ever met.

It is somewhat the fashion to speak of Juárez as the "Abraham Lincoln of Mexico," and there are indeed striking similarities of origin, career and temperament. The adobe hut in Oaxaca and the log cabin in Kentucky were equally wretched, and the drudgeries of poverty robbed both men of their childhood. One observes at every point the same loneliness of spirit, the same passionate love of humanity, the same deep, almost mystical religious feeling that made them turn away from dogma to the simple words of the Galilean. Both had slow, almost laborious, mental processes, working to conclusions rather than divining them, building solidly, not showily, and both, as a consequence, were often dwarfed by flashier personalities with a larger gift of showman's tricks in speech and deed. Here, however, the resemblance ends. Lincoln held a union together, and freed a subject race, but Juárez *made* a union and freed a whole people. Neither did Lincoln know what it was to be hunted like a wild beast from forest to desert, from desert to mountain;

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to suffer hunger, to undergo prison, exile and desertion. Still more, he was born in a country where every institution was dedicated to aspiration, and in his veins was the blood of the conquerors, while Juárez was an Indian, child of a race trampled under foot for three hundred years, its proud traditions not even a memory.

A Zapoteco, born in 1806 in the little village of San Pablo Guelatao, some thirty miles from Oaxaca, and an orphan from infancy, the young Benito came to be twelve without education of any kind—without even a word of Spanish to release him from the living prison of his native tongue. These early years are in deep shadow, but in the twelfth we find him trudging the long road to Oaxaca, where he had heard that there were schools able to teach the white magic of reading and writing. Taking service as a scullion, the boy's passionate desire for an education won the interest of his kindly employer, and at odd times he was given opportunity for elementary instruction. He must have swallowed his primers at a gulp, for in 1821 he was sufficiently advanced to enter the theological seminary with intent to take holy orders, a choice of life imposed by his employer in some degree, but indorsed by the strongly religious turn of his own mind. Even then, he "worked his way," for when Santa Anna came to Oaxaca in 1828 to arouse the people in behalf of Guerrero, Juárez waited on his table.

It was in this year that the young Indian made the decision which changed the whole course of his life. In backing Pedraza, the Church declared its iron opposition to the republican form of government, and in every community young liberals were faced by the necessity of choosing between their religion and their patriotism. Juárez does not seem to have hesitated, and leaving the Seminary he enrolled as a student in the new Institute of Sciences and Arts, a state school founded in 1826, and bitterly fought by the Church. Guerrero became his idol, and no less revered were the august shades of Hidalgo and Morelos, those tremendous priests who had dared to serve God by serving humanity.

Even in his student days there was a quality in the serious young Zapoteco that won popular confidence, and in 1831 he was elected an alderman, and in 1832 a deputy to the state legislature. Two

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years later he received his degree, but the practice of law made small appeal, and he accepted the chair of Experimental Physics in the Institute. Among the first to cry out against the dictatorship of Santa Anna in 1835, following Zavala's leadership, even prison did not repress him, and he protested unceasingly against the tyrannies of Bustamante and the intrigues of Paredes. In 1845, as the war clouds gathered, he was asked to become secretary to Antonio León, governor of the state, and his rare capabilities made such an impression that he was named attorney-general. When León left Oaxaca to meet a hero's death at El Molino, Juárez was one of the triumvirate that assumed charge of the government, but on election to Congress in 1846, he went to the Capital and watched greed and inefficiency drag his country down into the dust.

At all times the champion of Gómez Farías, he led the fight for the amortization of Church property, and was the unremitting foe of Santa Anna. As the struggle neared its end, the Liberal group in Oaxaca, appreciating that the fight for democracy would have to be made in the states, elected Juárez governor, and called him back to his home. In 1849 he was reelected, and again in 1851, when he retired to assume the directorship of his beloved Institute. As if racing against impending doom, he worked as never governor had worked before, reorganizing laws and finances, preaching civic virtue, building roads, reforming the tax system and the courts, developing agriculture and mining, establishing schools—even a trade school for girls—all with the feverish intensity of one who had not a moment to lose. When he left office, the state debt had been wiped out, there was money in the Treasury, and Oaxaca thrilled to a new pride and high resolve.

From the Institute, Juárez watched Arista's government run its brief course, and when announcement was made of Santa Anna's return he lifted his voice in solemn denunciation. Among the first to be arrested, he was imprisoned in the dungeons of San Juan Ulua, and then banished to New Orleans, where he worked at the humble trade of cigar-maker to keep body and soul together. He was soon the center of a revolutionary group, for Santa Anna instituted a reign of terror under which protest was a capital crime, and chief among the newcomers was Melchior Ocampo who had been

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unlike ~~men~~ of what Juárez was to Oaxaca. Never were two men  
pestuous ~~men~~, than the silent, brooding Indian and the brilliant,  
~~a friend~~ ~~tion~~ creole, yet their souls grappled with hooks of steel,  
~~and~~ ~~ship~~ formed that continued until death.

There can be no overestimation of the effect of this association upon Juárez. It was his first experience in true companionship, and as affection broke down barriers, he took to his heart much of Ocampo's fire. The unquestioning disciple of Rousseau and Proudhon, long freed of his own fetters, Ocampo ridded Juárez of many an inherited superstition, and particularly did he drive home the truth that Mexico could never achieve its hopes until civil government threw off the thrall of ecclesiastical rule. Juárez, whose whole life had been spent in the long shadows cast by cathedral spires, was a devout Catholic, oppressed at all times by fear of injuring the faith of his devotion, while Ocampo had come to the belief that God was not the exclusive property of any denomination. Alamán had called him atheist, anarchist and a "social peril," but he was more the Christian than Alamán, for his life was without other animation than fraternity, humanity and justice. His passionate emotionalism acted beneficially on the slower, colder mind of Juárez, and his leaping vision taught the more stolid Indian not to be daunted by horizons. Ocampo, lacking the granite qualities of patience, resolution and iron purpose, could not have done what Juárez did, but Juárez would never have done what he did but for the breadth and sweep that Ocampo gave.

It must have been a wonderful time, despite its poverty, for there were friendship, dreams, and hopes, all given larger vivacity by an environment that proved the capacity of a people to govern themselves. Here, in his odd times, Juárez perfected himself in English and French, and gave particular attention to the study of American institutions and the laws upon which they were based. It was in New Orleans that the idea of a new constitution formed—one that would strike at every root of evil—and it was from New Orleans that Álvarez drew his inspiration for the Plan of Ayutla. When Juárez and Ocampo joined the rebels at Acapulco, what had been an insurrection became a revolution, resistless in its sweep. Santa Anna, in his *Memoirs*, is not in doubt as to the man respon-

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sible for his downfall, and his true smallness was no more absolutely than by his explanation of Juárez.  
"He hated me," said the Dictator, "because he could not forgive that he had served my table."<sup>1</sup>

Although Comonfort came to rule, the reactionaries recognized Juárez as the master spirit of the reform movement. Even while all professed to despise him as an "ignorant Indian," they feared him, and in the hour of his imprisonment, begged Comonfort to kill him. This, then, was the man who now came to be president of Mexico, setting up his skeleton government at Guadalajara and daring to defy the might of the Church and the organized menace of a great army.

The very first clash of arms seemed to confirm the Zuloaga administration in its boastful self-confidence. A citizen force of seven thousand, put in the field by the states of Michoacán, Jalisco, Guanajuato, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, and San Luis Potosí, was decisively defeated by Osollo and Miramón at Salamanca, in Guanajuato. This news, reaching Guadalajara, worked a mighty change in the revolutionary ardor of one Colonel Landa, and, quickly switching sides, he arrested Juárez and his Cabinet and ordered them before a firing-squad. For a moment the fate of the revolution hung in the balance, but Prieto's eloquence moved the soldiers to turn against their own officers, and the prisoners were permitted to go free. Again in the town of Santa Ana Acatlán, Juárez and his Minister were surrounded, but such was Osollo's Spanish contempt for the "little Indian" that he did not take the trouble to tighten his loop, a mistake in judgment for which he was to pay dearly. Left without an army, hemmed in on every side by implacable foes, Juárez knew not which way to turn, but receiving word that Vera Cruz had declared for his cause, he left from Manzanillo in May for this new haven.

Before leaving, however, he made a decision which was to have powerful bearing upon a people's struggle. Overruling the protests of every adviser, he reached out into the fringe of unknown qualities about him, and lifted Santos Degollado to supreme command of the armed forces of the revolution. Justo Sierra, Mexico's foremost

<sup>1</sup> *Juárez*, by Justo Sierra, p. 17.

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historian, joins Degollado with Juárez and Ocampo as "the three great men of Mexico," and the inclusion is just. In no sense a military genius, even hopeless as a strategist, what he contributed to the revolution was the dynamic moral force of an ancient prophet. A devout Catholic, the tyrannies of the hierarchy horrified him as blasphemies against its own faith, and he brought to his task a double devotion—passionate patriotism and outraged Christianity. Juárez knew well the dark, bloody way that lay ahead, and what he wanted was not so much a military commander as an unconquerable spirit who would be unmoved by defeat and alien to despair. With the resolution of Juárez and the enthusiasm of Ocampo, Degollado drew armies from the ground, and fused each man with an understanding devotion that turned humble peons into indomitable crusaders. Among fluid souls he stood as a strong rock, and the flame of his spirit seemed to find its fuel in heartbreak and disaster.

Degollado raised an army in Zacatecas only to have it crushed; he raised another army to attack Guadalajara and was repulsed; and the one ray of light was the sudden and mysterious death of Osollo. Miramón, elevated to chief command, had none of the grim steadfastness of purpose that made Osollo so terrible a foe. Victory intoxicated him, defeat prostrated, and there was also a persistent juvenile note that bordered on irresponsibility. His very dash and swagger, however, made him the idol of his men, and his supreme self-confidence soothed every fear of the Church. Marching against San Luis Potosí and Guanajuato in July, he drove out the insurgents, and in September crushed the forces of Vidaurre in a five-days' battle at Ahualulco, killing five hundred and seventy and making three thousand prisoners. Degollado, taking advantage of Miramón's eastern campaign, captured Guadalajara, and meanwhile General Miguel Blanco and Governor Huerta gained control of Michoacán and boldly advanced on the City of Mexico. Miramón, returning in hot haste, tranquilized the frightened Capital and hurried with Márquez to Guadalajara, driving Degollado out.

Treachery and intrigue, inseparable from the thought and action of the professionalized soldiery, now came to aid the insurgents. The occupation of Vera Cruz by Juárez, made possible by Governor

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Gutiérrez Zamora, was depriving Zuloaga of the Customs receipts, a principal source of income, as well as shutting off supplies from the outside world. In December, therefore, General Echegaray "pronounced," blaming Zuloaga for his "criminal failure to proceed against Vera Cruz." What followed was in the best style of the Santa Anna school. Before Echegaray could reach the City, General Manuel Robles Pezuela had seized the presidency, and was sending messages to Juárez proposing the cessation of hostilities and a conference to decide the future of the country. Echegaray arriving upon the scene, the two rivals agreed to leave the choice to a Committee of Notables, and these eminent gentlemen calmly voted for Miramón. This bold leader, after retaking Guadalajara, had waded the Texpan River for the conquest of Colima, and then rushed on to destroy an enemy force at Barrancas de Beltran, a sequence of victories which impressed the Notables no little. Zuloaga, making a virtue of necessity, had resigned, but now rescinded his resignation, and after appointing Miramón as his successor, resigned again. On February 24, 1859, therefore, the dashing young warrior took possession of the palace, but office-holding bored him excessively after a few weeks, and, putting Zuloaga in his seat as a species of substitute, he marched for Vera Cruz with the announced purpose of "annihilating Juárez."

Coming before the port on March 18th, he instituted a siege that had every appearance of success. Degollado, however, had managed to raise six thousand men in Morelia, and advanced against the City of Mexico, a feint which forced Miramón to raise his siege and hurry back to the defense of the Capital. While he marched, Leonardo Márquez fell upon Degollado at Tacubaya, a suburb, and crushed the rebels in a furious battle that waged from dawn to dark. He followed the victory with a brutal massacre of all prisoners, not even sparing the doctors and nurses who came out from the City on a neutral errand of mercy, a savagery that gained him the title of "The Tiger of Tacubaya."<sup>2</sup>

Defeated on the battlefield, Juárez now decided to transfer the struggle to the hearts and minds of men. As governor of Oaxaca he had repeatedly declared the necessity of separating Church and

<sup>2</sup> Leon's, *Historia General de México*, p. 440.

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State, and in writing<sup>s</sup> campo, thought Comonfort hopelessly weak, bility of progress so only for Lerdo and Osollo. He was, however, of ecclesiastical power the preservation of a democratic form of gov- the land, control of crly reported his suspicions anent the increas- ment of taxes; more over Zuloaga by M. de Gabriac, the French Church's monopoly of he urged a loan of twelve millions to keep riage and death. Those pieces," but Buchanan refused to believe baptized, could not entenaginary. It is difficult to understand this their bodies laid in any  $\infty$  June 6, 1856, Dallas, his ambassador in

The bold thought of J "the rumored Spanish movement against the insurgent cause sank  $\approx$ terior purpose of Louis Napoleon either group demanded that theial house to the hall of the Montezumas ever, shrank from the actu, and Mexico in war as to furnish to the legislation should be ma<sup>r</sup> transferring Cuba to England." also his conviction that so vic<sup>s</sup>Buchanan became convinced, and For- be preceded by an extensive ec<sup>i</sup>plomatic relations with Zuloaga and coming to Vera Cruz from a t<sup>e</sup> he hung around the Capital until weight of his powerful personal some benefit, for he was able to Not only were people ready, but t<sup>a</sup> went on, Buchanan became in- land-holdings would furnish the see one hope of Mexico, and on loan in the United States. government and sent Robert

Ocampo alone dissented. The mere p<sup>t</sup>he claims of the United ownership of the Church's estates, he argued every possible way over to speculators, opening the door to every vaid, however, was corruption. What he wanted was to wait until some mad. defensive be devised for the honest and equitable division of the law inci- small plots for distribution among the people. He was right,er events proved, but Lerdo was also right. Degollado, summoned to report on the state of the army, declared frankly that not a general could be counted upon unless some of the reforms were decreed at once. Weighing every consideration in his usual deliberate manner, Juárez decided in favor of Lerdo and Degollado, and on July 12th issued the famous law which bears his name. Complete liberty in religion was asserted as necessary to national development and in line with modern thought; Church and State were separated absolutely; monasteries and convents were suppressed, and the secular- ization of the monks commanded; birth, marriage and burial were

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Gutiérrez Zamora, was depriving Zuloaga of the principal source of income, as well as shutting the outside world. In December, therefore, Gutiérrez affirmed its title to be essential to the dis-“pronounced,” blaming Zuloaga for his “criminal” against Vera Cruz.” What followed was in the very roots of social Santa Anna school. Before Echegaray could react, Manuel Robles Pezuela had seized the president, attempting to break its messages to Juárez proposing the cessation of hostilities to decide the future of the country. Ecce the scene, the two rivals agreed to leave the <sup>not be I who shall reduce</sup> of Notables, and these eminent gentlemen came. This bold leader, after retaking Guadalupe, could have been counted Texpan River for the conquest of Colima, Catholics who believed in destroy an enemy force at Barrancas de Belén, in despotism, yet in the face tories which impressed the Notables no <sup>only</sup> preached of the struggle virtue of necessity, had resigned, but now <sup>not</sup> lists were called “Philistines,” and after appointing Miramón as his “Young Maccabee,” and his followers, he marched for Vera Cruz. It was not with the Catholic Church as nihilating Juárez.” Mexico quarreled, but with the Catholic hierarchy.

Coming before the organization, as a land monopoly, as a loan shark. had every appearance, seeing the necessity of continuous attack, entered into to raise six millions with Jecker, a Swiss, on October 29th, and in return of Mexican \$618,000 in cash and \$300,000 in supplies, gave the government’s notes for fifteen millions, a typical instance of the manner in which Mexico’s foreign debt was incurred. Only a little later, Márquez stopped a *conducta* and robbed it of \$600,000 belonging to foreign merchants, and while the government repudiated his action and deposed him from command, Europe remained deeply angered. In conjunction with Miramón’s loss of moral support, the Juárez government now commenced to receive the powerful assistance of the United States.

Gadsden, recalled in 1856, had been succeeded by John Forsyth of Alabama. A Southerner and a man of strong prejudices, he did

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not like Juárez or Ocampo, thought Comonfort hopelessly weak, and had good words only for Lerdo and Osollo. He was, however, sincerely interested in the preservation of a democratic form of government, and continually reported his suspicions anent the increasing influence exercised over Zuloaga by M. de Gabriac, the French Minister. In one letter he urged a loan of twelve millions to keep Mexico from "falling to pieces," but Buchanan refused to believe the danger other than imaginary. It is difficult to understand this blindness, for as early as June 6, 1856, Dallas, his ambassador in London, had written that, "the rumored Spanish movement against Mexico . . . involves an ulterior purpose of Louis Napoleon either to send a scion of his imperial house to the hall of the Montezumas . . . or so to involve Spain and Mexico in war as to furnish to the former a plausible reason for transferring Cuba to England."

By July, 1858, however, Buchanan became convinced, and Forsyth was ordered to break off diplomatic relations with Zuloaga and return at once. Instead of that, he hung around the Capital until late October, a delay which had some benefit, for he was able to give sanctuary to Lerdo. As time went on, Buchanan became increasingly certain that Juárez was the one hope of Mexico, and on April 6, 1859, recognized the Juárez government and sent Robert McLane of Maryland to Vera Cruz. The claims of the United States against Mexico were pigeonholed, and in every possible way the cause of Juárez was given assistance. Direct aid, however, was a necessity, and while Ocampo urged an offensive and defensive alliance for the "protection and consolidation of democratic principles," McLane insisted that the Republican senate would never consent to such a treaty and its inevitable loan, without some appearance of consideration. As a consequence, the question of transit routes was revived, and under presidential direction, Ocampo and McLane drew up a treaty which was ready for presentation in December.

This treaty, like every other diplomatic contact between the two republics, has been subjected to distortion and misrepresentation by Mexican historians, who chose to treat it without relation to the facts responsible for it. At the time of the negotiations, Mexico lay inert, scarcely seeming to breathe. Civil war had paralyzed agricul-

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ture and industry, and the only trade consisted of scattered caravans traveling under armed escort. Famine stalked the land and everywhere was profound wretchedness. The Zuloaga government was openly seeking foreign intervention, and in September, Almonte, now Minister to Great Britain, concluded a treaty with Spain which recognized the dishonest claims repudiated by Comonfort. Gutiérrez Estrada was also plotting in London and Paris, and their letters to Father Miranda, intercepted by Juárez, proved that Europe was seriously considering the creation of an empire in Mexico with a foreign prince upon the throne.

Where else could Juárez turn but to the United States? Nor was the McLane-Ocampo treaty "shameful" in any of its provisions. In return for \$4,000,000 and open aid, Juárez guaranteed to American citizens in Mexico religious liberty and exemption from forced loans; he gave right of transit across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec with due insistence that the sovereignty of Mexico should never be questioned or impaired; in addition, there was permission for the United States to send goods from Nogales to Guaymas, and from the Rio Grande to Mazatlán without payment of duty when such goods were not sold in Mexico. Those trade concessions, as a matter of fact, were as valuable to Mexico as they were to the United States, and the clause under which Juárez was to receive aid was carefully worded so as to safeguard Mexican sovereignty: "If any of the stipulations of existing treaties between the United States and Mexico are violated, or the safety and security of the citizens of either republic are endangered within the territory of the other, and the legitimate and acknowledged government therof may be unable from any cause to enforce such stipulations or to provide such safety and security, it shall be obligatory in that government to seek the aid of the other in maintaining their due execution, as well as order and security."

At the time it did not seem possible that Juárez would ever be in position to make the least return for the four million dollars that the United States was to advance, for, in November Degollado had been defeated again at Las Estancias de Las Vacas, and Miramón was full master of the land. The treaty, in its essence, was President Buchanan's affirmation of faith in the right of the people

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to rule. Moreover, he held that the fact of the treaty's existence, even though unratified, constituted an obligation, and when Miramón again menaced Vera Cruz on March 8, 1860, Secretary of State Cass notified McLane that "If a hostile force approach that place, and you consider American citizens in danger, you will request the commanding officers of our ships of war upon that coast to land such force as is necessary and employ them for protection." On the 10th, he made further order that Miramón's blockade edict should not be recognized. The Young Maccabee, it may be explained, planned an attack by sea as well as land, for two boats had been bought and equipped in Havana. The harbor was filled with foreign war-craft—five Spanish, five French and several British—and to meet the situation, Buchanan sent seven American ships. As the two boats of Miramón came to anchor, Commodore Turner brought his flagship alongside, and seized them as piratical craft without legal standing on the high seas. The boldness of the *coup* staggered the French and Spanish, and as they continued to gasp, Miramón gave up the siege as hopeless. On May 24th the Senate tied Buchanan's hands by rejecting the treaty.<sup>3</sup>

Although Juárez was, and still is, sternly censured for having accepted "Yankee aid," the Vera Cruz incident was the turning-point of the war. Encouraged by Miramón's defeat, the ever-hopeful Zuloaga decided to risk another gamble, and announced that he had withdrawn his resignation and was once more to be considered for president. Miramón's answer was a swift march to the City where he made Zuloaga prisoner with his own hands, and then hurried off with him to the relief of General Woll, hard pressed in Guadalajara by Uraga. This done, the Young Maccabee decided upon a Napoleonic campaign in the south, only to find that the affairs of the insurgents had taken on a vastly different complexion. Ocampo, preaching incessantly that the rebellion was not against the Church but only against evil men in the Church, had reached the people

<sup>3</sup> In *President Obregon: World Reformer*, p. 276, Dr. E. J. Dillon writes that the United States, in pursuance of its policy of "gripping extortion," had "pressed and bullied this noble-minded man [Juárez] into purchasing official recognition and a paltry advance of \$4,000,000 with acceptance of a treaty which spelled irretrievable ruin to his country." He utterly ignores the Senate's rejection of the treaty and the fact that Juárez had been recognized in 1859, a full year before.

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with his arguments, and thousands were enlisting. Moreover, lack of leadership had been remedied, for Ignacio Zaragoza and Jesus Gonzales Ortega, two young lawyers, were now in high posts by reason of their repeated proofs of military genius.

Beaten in several minor engagements, Miramón was brought to bay by Zaragoza and Ortega at Silao on August 10th, and crushingly defeated. To add to his troubles, Zuloaga escaped, and there was the fear that he would again rescind his resignation. Rushing to the City, therefore, the Young Maccabee hastily assembled a Council of Notables, deposed Zuloaga once and for all, and then had himself elected president in his own right. Even so, his heaven was black with the storm clouds of disaster, for Porfirio Diaz had recaptured Oaxaca; Zaragoza and Ortega were re-taking city after city; and his own army was dwindling daily through desertion.

There was a moment, however, when the outcome again hung in the balance by reason of the sudden and amazing defection of Degollado. In September, he had felt compelled to capture a treasure-train, and although the money was returned at once, the moral revulsion had all the effect of a physical collapse. He felt that he had soiled himself and the cause by this act of banditry, and remorse completed the demoralization of a mind undone by months of terrible strain. Always one who hated blood and suffering, and anguished by the sight of his country's misery, Degollado became obsessed by a dream of peace. Skillful English agents, working upon the sick, unhappy man, made him believe that the war would last for years, and convinced him that only personalities stood in the way of harmony and accord. "Eliminate Juárez," they said, "and France and England will unite to retire Miramón and restore peace." Completely deceived by this specious appeal, which had no other object than the destruction of Juárez, the one man feared, Degollado was actually engaged in parleys when he was arrested in October. Not only did this prompt action by Juárez avert serious results, but the attitude of the United States aided largely in establishing public opinion. Buchanan refused to support the proposition, and gave McLane authority to make public announcement that the United States, even to the point of armed action, was "determined to resist any forcible attempt to impose a particular ad-

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justment of the existing conflict against the will and sanction of the people of Mexico, and also any forcible intervention, by any foreign power, which looks to the control of the political destiny thereof."

In November, Ortega and Zaragoza captured Guadalajara, defeated Márquez, who had been restored to command, and commenced a circular movement that pressed the "Israelites" closer and closer to the Capital. Again desperate for money, Miramón boldly invaded the British Legation and stole \$760,000 that Juárez had collected in 1857 for payment on the foreign debt. However, unlike Santa Anna, he purchased supplies instead of regarding it as personal loot. In December he captured Toluca, but as he marched back to the Capital, he came upon the forces of González Ortega and Zaragoza in the hills of San Miguel Calpulalpan. All morning of the 20th the two armies grappled in a struggle to the death, but even as victory hung in the balance, Miramón's army deserted in a body, and only flight saved the Young Maccabee.

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ON January 1, 1861, González Ortega entered the City at the head of his victorious army. With his fierce mustaches, dark, sultry eyes and Hyperion locks, the hero of the hour presented a Byronic *ensemble* that met every pictorial demand, nor was he lacking in the dramatic touch. Catching sight of Degollado in the shadow of a balcony, he called him down, embraced the disgraced general in full sight of the multitude and pressed upon him his own crown of laurel. When Juárez came up from Vera Cruz on the 11th, his reception was cordial rather than enthusiastic. The people admired and respected him, but there was nothing in that worn, impassive face to excite mob adulation, nor did his ill-fitting black coat fill the eye. What he represented was law, order, and duty, poor things to balance against the color and romance of such a paladin as Jesus González Ortega.

The very first act of Juárez gave the measure of the man, had measure been needed. Instantly, inexorably, disregarding the whispered cautions of associates and the threats of infuriated power, he ordered the deportation of Monseigneur Clementi, the papal delegate, Archbishops Garza and Ballesteros, Bishop Munguia and three other prelates, and the ministers of Spain and Guatemala, charging and proving their direct connection with Miramón and Zuloaga. Then, true to his promise, he called an election to choose a new president and congress. For a wretched time it seemed as if Mexico's dawning hopes were to be extinguished under the old dead weight of sordid personal ambitions. González Ortega, resigning as Secretary of War, announced his candidacy, and the Church, hoping to create further division, slyly promoted a movement in favor of Miguel Lerdo de Tejada. Even as this true patriot was refusing to be a candidate, pointing to Juárez as the one man able to meet Mexico's needs, death came to him, toil and hardship finally taking toll of his frail body. On March 24th, two days later, came announcement of the death of Zamora, the staunch Governor of Vera Cruz.

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These two calamities had a sobering effect on the popular mind, and as they viewed the mass of pressing problems, people turned away from the dashing González Ortega and elected Juárez by an overwhelming majority.

Instead of the peace that might have permitted him to put entire emphasis on reconstruction, Juárez found himself beset by every variety of difficulty and harassment. The Church plotted more secretly but no less busily, and wherever one turned the eye, marauding bands of reactionaries robbed, burned and murdered. Miramón himself had fled the country, but Zuloaga, Márquez, and Mejía remained, and in the Sierra de Alica the barbarous Manuel Lozada captained a horde of desperadoes eager for any atrocity. The climax of this terrorism came with the death of Ocampo on June 3d. Surprising him on his farm in Michoacán, Márquez and Zuloaga shot him down in cold blood and hung the riddled body from a tree in the yard. Degollado, awaiting trial, begged the privilege of avenging the assassination of his friend and idol, but in an encounter at El Monte de las Cruces—where once Hidalgo had fought Iturbide—he himself was captured and killed.

Ortega, marching against the guerrillas in August, scattered them far and wide, and victory restored all of his old Byronic glamor. He had been elected president of the Supreme Court, accepting second place with seeming good grace, but military success fired his inflammable vanity anew, and he gave eager ear to political plots. The orators of Congress, emerging from cover, commenced a campaign of abuse against the President—an invariable habit of parliamentary bodies after a war—and the torrential Ignacio Altimirano won applause by declaring him “incapable of vigorous, sustained and energetic action.” Juárez, with his notions of public service, political virtue, economy and honesty, was hateful to the average politician; and even professed Liberals, used to considering revolution as a game, shrank from an implacability that had no room for gestures. Suddenly, out of a clear sky, fifty-one members of the Chamber of Deputies signed a petition calmly asking the President to resign in favor of González Ortega. A counter-petition was filed at once, containing the name of every authoritative figure

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in public life, but though the plot collapsed as suddenly as it had formed, many ugly scars were left. Still holding on to the presidency of the Supreme Court, Ortega rushed off to Zacatecas, where he took up the duties of governor, paying no attention to the protests of Juárez, who pointed to a constitutional provision that forbade the occupancy of two offices at the same time.

It was with these knives at his back that the President turned to face international complications of a most distressing character. France had recognized his government at once, but Saligny, the minister, was soon demanding payment of the \$15,000,000 Jecker note which Miramón had given for \$618,000 in cash, basing this impudent claim on the ground that French citizens had invested in Jecker bonds. Spain pressed the disgraceful claims that Almonte had recognized anew in the name of the Zuloaga government. Not only did Great Britain refuse to grant recognition until Juárez agreed to replace Miramón's theft, but her minister, Sir Charles Wyke, urged armed force as the one method of collection. Behind the ugly insistences of these countries loomed Europe's long-cherished ambition to gain a foothold in the New World for the purpose of balancing American power in the western hemisphere. The United States, on the verge of civil war, looked to be helpless, and even as rumors of Mexican intervention began to multiply, Spain openly incited a monarchical movement in San Domingo, and Great Britain made no secret of her hope to acquire Cuba.

William H. Seward, just come to be Secretary of State, took instant alarm, and on April 1, 1861, advised President Lincoln as follows: "I would demand explanations from Spain and France, categorically, at once. I would seek explanations from Great Britain and Russia and send agents into Canada, Mexico and Central America to arouse a vigorous continental spirit of independence on this continent against European intervention. And if satisfactory explanations are not received from Spain and France, would convene Congress and declare war against them." At the same time he wrote Tassara, the Spanish minister, about the attempt to re-introduce Spanish authority in San Domingo, threatening "prompt, persistent, and if possible, effective resistance." A copy of the protest was sent to Mexico and the Central American republics and Juárez gave his

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"adhesion to the doctrine of sustaining American nationalities in their existing autonomy."

These gestures failed of effect, for Fort Sumter was attacked on April 12th, and Lincoln's problem became one of self-preservation. Agents of the Confederacy flooded Mexico at once, asking an offensive and defensive alliance that would have given the South control from Texas to the Isthmus, shutting off all aid from California and the west. Seward quickly exhumed Thomas Corwin of "bloody hands" and "hospitable graves" fame, and hurried him off to Mexico to counteract Southern efforts, but without waiting for argument, Juárez made his decision. Hating slavery, he rebuffed the Confederacy, and even gave the Union Government permission to move troops across Mexican territory from Guaymas to Arizona.

Encouraged by the fact of the Civil War in America, European powers increased their truculent demands upon Juárez for instant payment of claims, although they were already in possession of the larger part of Mexico's revenue. The customs at Vera Cruz and Tampico, for instance, were hypothecated up to seventy-nine per cent.: twenty-seven per cent. going to London bondholders, twenty-four per cent. to the British convention, eight per cent. to the French convention, and twenty per cent. for other purposes, while the Pacific ports were no less heavily pledged. Congress, quarreling and quibbling like so many unruly children, blocked every move to rehabilitate the nation's finances, and in July, just as Juárez was about to conclude a convention with Wyke, the British minister, the politicians resolved that there should be a suspension of payments on the national debt for two years. Straightway France, Great Britain, and Spain branded it as repudiation and severed diplomatic relations, whereupon Lincoln, seeing the evil consequences that might follow, had Seward send the following letter to Corwin on September 2d:

The President ardently wishes that the political status of Mexico as an independent nation will be maintained. The events you communicate have alarmed him upon this subject, and he believes that the people of the United States will not consider him just if an effort is not made to impede such a calamity in this continent as will be the extinction of

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a republic. He has decided to authorize you to negotiate a treaty with the Republic of Mexico by which the Government of the United States will assume the payment of the interest of the 3 per cent. consolidated debt which that country owes to the owners of the Mexican bonds, which debt is figured out to be nearly sixty-two million pesos, for the term of five years from the date of the decree given by the Mexican Government suspending that payment, on the condition that that government undertakes to pay to the United States for the reimbursement of the money loaned an interest of 6 per cent., warranting such payment with specific retention upon all public lands, and upon the mines in the different Mexican states of Lower California, Chihuahua, Sonora, and Sinaloa, these mortgaged properties to fall under the absolute domain of the United States at the end of the term of six years counted since the signing of this treaty, if the said reimbursement has not taken place during that term.

Because of the mortgage clauses, Mexican historians make a practice of attacking the proposal as a base attempt to take advantage of the desperate plight of Juárez, and at no point is there effort or willingness to take account of the equally desperate plight of the Union Government. The battle of Bull Run had been fought on July 21st, and instead of the easy victory that had been expected, Lincoln knew now that the struggle would be long, terrible, and doubtful. Every dollar was needed, and the loan to Mexico represented life blood. As for the security, what other had Mexico to offer? And with six years of peace, was there any reason to assume that by 1866 Mexico would not be able to return the money? Moreover, there was the plain fact that Mexico herself had asked the European governments for a postponement of only two years.

The presentation of the treaty was the signal for every force of malice and misunderstanding. The Church and the privileged classes fought it because they wanted intervention, and the demagogues fought it out of their desire to harass and prejudice. As a consequence, Juárez was forced to disapprove. Meanwhile, Sir Charles Wyke, the British minister, had come to implicit faith in Juárez, and of his own volition entered into conversations with Manuel Zamacona, Secretary of Foreign Relations, reaching an agreement which provided financial relief for Mexico in return for

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full recognition of every British claim, and surrender of all Custom-houses to British control. Congress rejected the treaty, and Wyke reluctantly followed the other ministers to Jalapa.

It would have amounted to nothing, in any event, for on October 31st, France, Spain, and Great Britain had signed an agreement to send military and naval forces to Mexico for the collection of their claims, although specifically declaring that there was no intent "to impose any form of government." The United States, invited to join, returned an emphatic refusal, but well knowing that the Civil War tied Lincoln's hands, the Powers sent their ships to sea, reaching Vera Cruz on January 2, 1862.

Lincoln and Seward fully appreciated their powerlessness, for not only was every man and every dollar urgently needed at home, but there was the danger that any violent gesture might lead to the recognition of the Confederacy by England, France, and Spain. Dissembling indignation, therefore, the astute Seward took up his pen and set out to make a record which would be available on the day when the United States should be free to put force behind the Monroe Doctrine. In successive notes he badgered the Allies, individually and collectively, into giving specific assurances that the purpose was not intervention, and not a change in the government of Mexico, but merely the collection of debts. Even when Spain and Great Britain withdrew, and France alone proceeded with the invasion, Seward's statecraft maneuvered Louis Napoleon into positions where he was compelled to pledge his nation's honor that there would be no interference with Mexico's republican form of government. The record made, Seward pigeonholed it for future reference, and turned back to America's own troubles.

The forces of the Allies for the invasion of Mexico were six thousand Spanish troops, twenty-five hundred French and seven hundred English marines. On February 19th, at Soledad, a preliminary convention was ratified, recognizing Juárez and again disowning all intent to conquer, but demanding recognition of their claims. As the yellow fever season was at hand, Juárez permitted the allied forces to leave the lowlands and march to Orizaba, and at every point met insolence with careful courtesy, explaining his finances in detail, asking only time and forbearance, and vigorously disavow-

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ing any thought of repudiation. In proof of his sincerity, he recognized a debt in the sum of \$69,994,000 to Great Britain, \$9,460,000 to Spain, and \$2,860,000 to France. M. de Saligny, however, scorned the offer, and demanded the instant payment of \$15,000,000 on the Jecker claim, and \$12,000,000 for unspecified claims. Juárez naturally protested, pointing out that Miramón was a rebel against the government at the time of the Jecker transaction; that only \$618,000 in cash and \$300,000 in supplies had been received in any event, and that France had no concern with the claim as Jecker was not a French citizen.

Great Britain supported him, for as Lord Russell, Palmerston's Foreign Secretary, said: "It is hardly possible that claims so excessive as that of \$12,000,000 in the lump, without an account, and that of \$15,000,000 for \$750,000 actually received, can have been put forward with an expectation that they would be complied with." Palmerston, moreover, was becoming convinced that the Mexicans were unalterably opposed to European intervention, and that persistence in the attempt meant a long, costly, and disastrous war. Spain also was losing enthusiasm, for General Juan Prim happened to be a man of honor and vision, and soon saw that he was merely serving as France's cat's-paw. Plain breaches of faith on the part of France gave excuse for the inevitable rupture. Miramón attempted to land at Vera Cruz, was arrested by the British and returned to Havana. A few days later General Count de Lorencez arrived in Mexico, bringing with him Almonte and Padre Miranda. Juárez protested against the admission of these enemies and Prim and Wyke upheld the protest. The French, however, returned an insolent answer, whereupon the compact was dissolved and the British and the Spanish quit the country.

Neither honesty nor prudence, however, had power to wake Louis Napoleon from his dream of world domain. Drunk with inherited imperialism, he had already involved his country in China, Algeria, Italy, and the Papal States, and Mexico was to be his entering wedge in the New World. As he explained to Spain, intervention in Mexico meant that "we shall have restored to the Latin race upon the opposite side of the ocean, its strength and prestige; we shall have guaranteed the security to our colonies in the Antilles, and to

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those of Spain; we shall have established our beneficent influence in the center of America, and this influence, by creating immense openings to our commerce, will procure for us the matter [cotton] indispensable to our industry."

For months he had been pledging his honor that he intended no assault upon Mexico's republican institutions, and yet on July 3, 1862 (as was revealed at a later day), he wrote to General Forey that France could not sit by and see the United States "become the sole master of the markets of the New World. . . . If Mexico . . . by the aid of the French arms, can maintain a stable government, then we shall have built up an impassable barrier against the invasion of the United States. . . . In regard to the prince who will be placed upon the throne of Mexico, he will be compelled to act always for the benefit of the interests of France, not only by reason of gratitude, but because the citizens of his new country are with us, and he will be maintained there only through our influence. In this way our military honor, the interests of our policy, the interests of our industry and our trade, all impose upon us the duty of marching upon the capital of Mexico, there to raise up our flag audaciously and to establish a monarchy."

Drunk with these determinations, Louis Napoleon ordered war. It looked like child's play from Paris, for Gutiérrez Estrada had assured him that there would be no resistance worthy of the name, and the Count de Lorencez had reported that his army possessed "such a superiority of race, organization, discipline, morality and elevation of sentiment" over the Mexicans that he was already "the master of Mexico." He judged from the Mexicans about him, for renegades flocked from every quarter, led by Almonte, Márquez, Zuloaga, Mariano Salas, Teodosio Lares and other graduates of the Santa Anna school. Zuloaga advanced his old claims to the presidency, but Almonte thrust him aside and proclaimed himself Supreme Ruler, Commander in Chief of the National Armies, etc., and welcomed "the beneficent and civilizing influence of the illustrious sovereign of France." Of all Miramón's generals, only Negrete and Uraga offered their swords to Juárez, the acceptance of which he was to regret at a later time.

De Lorencez, receiving Napoleon's orders, calmly disregarded

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the treaty obligation that compelled him to return to Vera Cruz in event of the failure of the Orizaba conference, and marched against Puebla. Uranga, in command for lack of a better, was inclined to fall back, reporting the city as indefensible, and with the intuition of genius, Juárez transferred command to Ignacio Zaragoza, the young general who had shown such rare qualities in the campaign against Miramón. On May 5, 1862, the battle was fought, and to this day the *Cinco de Mayo* is a national holiday that commemorates the great victory. The French army of six thousand was composed of veterans, and aiding them were several thousand Mexican renegades under the various commands of Almonte, Mejía and Márquez. From dawn to dark the French vainly hurled themselves against the wild courage of the patriot defenders, only four thousand in number, and at night it was a demoralized and defeated army that struggled back to Orizaba. Had orders been obeyed, Zaragoza might well have driven the French into the sea, reoccupying Vera Cruz, but González Ortega, with his usual insubordination, failed to execute explicit directions. Sent to occupy a strategic point for a night attack on Orizaba, he exercised his own independent judgment, with the result that the French routed him by a surprise assault, capturing his guns, and forcing Zaragoza to abandon the attempt.

The French were as surprised as they were bitter, for as Lorencez informed his army, ". . . a hundred times you were told that the City of Puebla called you with anxiety, and that the inhabitants would wish to embrace you and crown you with flowers . . . deceived France will know how to recognize her errors." Realizing the task to be more difficult than had been supposed, Napoleon III sent General Elias Forey to Mexico with twenty-five thousand men. The new commander landed at Vera Cruz on September 22d, and one of his first acts was to put an end to Almonte's grandiose pretensions. This worthy had been issuing Neronian decrees, appointing officials, printing paper money, and so forth, but with one contemptuous gesture Forey ordered him to have done with his nonsense. Planning carefully, it was not until the new year that the French general took the field, coming before Puebla on March 16, 1863, at the head of thirty-one thousand men.

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As if fate meant to test the soul of Juárez to the utmost, Zaragoza had died a few months before, and popular clamor forced the appointment of González Ortega, so entirely lacking in the moral qualities that enabled Degollado and Zaragoza to give men a conviction of invincibility. Moreover, instead of striking boldly at the enemy while it was scattered in an encircling movement, Ortega sat idle and let investment proceed without resistance. Nevertheless, he had at his side such men as Porfirio Diaz and Mariano Escobedo, and Comonfort, returned to wipe out the memory of his vacillations, and for fifty-six days the City held out, surrendering only when ammunition was utterly exhausted and when every horse and dog had been eaten.

Juárez fled to San Luis Potosí before the victorious advance of the French, and set up a government that rested under the shadow of envy and intrigue. Beside him, watching him as though he were a prisoner, stood the arrogant Doblado and the sinister Vidaurri, refraining from treason only because each feared the other. Not only was this situation intolerable enough, but lack of men and money contributed to his gloom and despair. Corwin, that great champion of Mexico, proved to be as characterless in 1861 as he had been in 1846, and, more interested in concessions than in Mexican liberty, refused to follow Juárez, thus depriving the government of an asset. Comonfort was captured and shot by Márquez, and the one ray of light was the coming of Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada (no less brilliant and selfless than his dead brother), who took place in the Cabinet to be a tower of strength.

Forey, entering the City triumphantly on June 10th, named a Council of Notables headed by Lares, which body, in turn, appointed a governing committee composed of Almonte, Archbishop Labastida and Salas. The next step, as planned, was an invitation to Ferdinand Maximilian, Archduke of Austria, to become Emperor of Mexico. This member of the House of Hapsburg had been governor of Lombardo-Venetia until Lombardy's forced restoration to Italy, and was now holding a mimic court at Trieste, ameliorating the cares of state by botanical pursuits and the perpetration of bad poetry. Tall, strikingly handsome in a bovine way, and with billowy golden whiskers carefully grown to conceal a weak chin, his char-

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acter was admirably set forth in a brilliant paragraph that John Motley penned to Oliver Wendell Holmes: "Maximilian adores bull fights, rather regrets the Inquisition, and considers the Duke of Alva everything noble and chivalrous and most abused of men. It would do your heart good to hear his invocation to that deeply injured shade, and his denunciations of the ignorant and vulgar Protestants who have defamed him."

It was in 1840 that Gutiérrez Estrada had first broached his idea of a monarchy, and ever since, this able and ingratiating person had been going from court to court in Europe, trying to inveigle some ruling house into support of his project. A Spanish prince was the original idea, but the negotiations came to nothing, and Estrada, marrying into the family of Metternich, had Maximilian brought under his eye. As early as 1861 he took up the matter with the Archduke, and finding him more than willing, concentrated upon Louis Napoleon as the backer of the enterprise. The plausible Estrada not only convinced the Emperor of the French that Mexico was eager for a monarch, but that the selection of Maximilian would win the favor of Austria, one assertion having as little truth in it as the other, and so the compact was concluded.

Various considerations joined to lure the dreamy Hapsburg from the beauty and security of the gardens at Miramar. His brother, the Emperor Franz Josef—hard, mean, and suspicious—hated the pictorial Maximilian, and not only was the governorship of Venetia merely nominal, but even the money for his upkeep was doled out with all the effect of alms. A kindly, simple soul beneath his large manner, Maximilian loved the Harun-al-Rashid tradition, and cherished the dream of a grateful people rising up to call him blessed. Instead of that he had to sit helpless while Austrian agents, under personal orders from Franz Josef, killed and burned to crush Italian patriotism, even flogging women until they fainted in their own blood. A throne in Mexico all his very own, with a chance to live in history as Maximilian the Good, appealed to him irresistibly, nor was the prospect any the less alluring to the Archduchess Charlotte. The only daughter of Leopold I of Belgium—young, beautiful, and ambitious—she loathed Franz Josef's nagging and the

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subserviencies that he imposed, and the thought of an imperial diadem set her proud heart on fire.

All had been arranged when the Mexican delegation presented itself with the invitation from the Council of Notables, but either from shrewd policy or sheer love of gesture, weeks were given to play-acting. On bended knees the crown would be offered by Estrada and Father Miranda, and Maximilian would wave it aside with some such burst of rhetoric as this: "You speak to me of a scepter, a place and power. You desire that the web of my life should be wrought with gold and diamonds. But have you power to give me peace of mind? Do riches confer happiness in your sight? Oh, rather let me pursue my quiet life unseen beside the shadowing myrtle. The study of science and the muse are more pleasing to me than the blaze of gold and diamonds."<sup>1</sup> As a dramatic finale, the Archduke refused to receive the crown until assured that the call proceeded from the hearts of the people, and demanded an election. With the French holding every Mexican city of any size, the request presented small difficulty, and in due course came word that his designation as Emperor had been "ratified by the enthusiastic adhesion of an immense majority of the country."

Bowing in humble submission to the popular mandate, Maximilian put his "personal feelings to one side," and on April 10, 1864, accepted the Mexican throne in the presence of a brilliant assemblage. Franz Josef was a witness, but his presence was due principally to the fact that he wanted Maximilian's signature to a document renouncing all Austrian rights and privileges. Even before he had received the news of the Mexican election, the Archduke had journeyed to Brussels and London to take leave of his royal relatives, and now nothing remained but an interview with the Pope. In Rome the Emperor and the Holy Father exchanged visits, and after mass in the Vatican, where Pius administered communion with his own hands, he delivered a farewell address with these words as its central thought: "The rights of the people are great, but greater and more sacred are the rights of the church."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Discursos Pronunciados en Miramar y en Trieste*, Jose María Gutiérrez Estrada.

<sup>2</sup> *Mexico and Maximilian*, by Frederick Hall, p. 101.

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Almonte, an old friend, met the royal pair at Vera Cruz, and so delighted Maximilian by his report of \$300,000 in the treasury that he was instantly made Grand Marshal of the Court and Minister of the Imperial House. Cordoba, Orizaba, and Puebla greeted their new rulers with due acclaim, *Te Deums* alternating with balls, but there was a quality of ecstasy in the reception extended by the City. No place in all the world has such a wealth of blossom as the floating gardens of Xochimilco, and they were swept clean of their flowers to cover the bloodstained cobblestones of the broad avenues; guns boomed, thanksgiving chorals rang from the churches, and gorgeous vestments and gay uniforms stood as a screen between the royal dreamers and the misery and rebellion that crouched in the background. On June 12th a glittering coronation took place in the great cathedral built by the Conquerors upon the gory site of Montezuma's sacrificial pyramid, and the royal pair—now Maximiliano and Carlota—took up the work of government. A journey into the interior was stage-managed with skill, and after solemnly celebrating the anniversary of Mexican independence at Hidalgo's altar in Dolores, the Emperor returned to Mexico firmly convinced that he had won the faith and love of the people. As a further foundation for his optimism, an army of sixty-five thousand was at his call—thirty thousand French, six thousand Austrians, thirteen hundred Belgians, and the rest renegades under Miramón, Márquez and Mejía.

Forey had spent \$50,000 on entertainment in three months, and a Hapsburg was not to be outdone by any French general. Chapultepec was refurnished at a cost of \$100,000, the purchase of horses totaled \$319,000, and solid gold plate and elaborate court costumes consumed additional thousands. The days were filled with lavish pageants and amateur theatricals, which, together with writing manuals of court etiquette, and inventing medals, gave the Emperor an infinitely satisfying sense of activity. The court favorite was Eloin, a Belgian engineer who sang comic songs delightfully, and as if to lose no minute in which to be useless, the Emperor rose at five each morning.

The treaty of Miramar, signed the same day that Maximilian accepted the crown, recognized this indebtedness to France in return

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for guarantees of military support; 270,000,000 francs for the expenses of the French expedition up to July 1, 1864; 4,000,000 francs for each transport that made a trip to Vera Cruz (about \$480,000 a year); 1,000 francs a year per man for the thirty thousand French soldiers in Mexico after July 1st; 12,000,000 francs for the Jecker claim, and the indemnification of all French subjects for all losses. France was invading Mexico because Juárez had failed to meet his obligations, yet before Maximilian reached his throne, Louis Napoleon had forced him to incur an additional debt of \$56,000,000, and annual payments of about \$6,000,000, all exclusive of interest charges. Moreover, the Council of Notables had voted the Emperor \$1,500,000 a year in order that he might discharge his duties in a befitting manner, while Carlota received an award of \$192,000 a year. To get money to run his government, Maximilian had borrowed \$40,000,000 in London and Paris at thirty-seven per cent. discount. After French payments, and Maximilian's own deductions for private obligations, less than \$5,000,000 went into the Mexican Treasury.

## 23: The End of Empire

**W**HILE this tinsel drama played to its triumphant finale, only the iron will of Juárez sustained the national cause. The haughty Forey, homesick for Paris boulevards, had left Mexico in 1863, and in his place stood François Achille Bazaine. Although 1870 was to see this warrior surrender Metz and 173,000 men without a blow, earning a sentence of degradation and death for his cowardice, he proved a man of might against the half-armed, untrained soldiers of Juárez. Thrust followed thrust; Luciano Prieto treacherously handed over Jalapa; Berthier and Márquez took Morelia, and then whipped Uraga; Mejía and Douay captured Queretaro, drove Manual Doblado out of Guanajuato with one blast of their bugles, and marched on San Luis Potosí, forcing Juárez to set up his government in Saltillo, from which mountain town he watched fresh defeats and new betrayals.

Mejía and the French crushed Negrete in two decisive battles, and Aramberri and Parrodi led a parade of traitor "generals" into the Imperialist camp. Bazaine's advance drove Arteaga into the wilds of Jalisco, where Uraga hid, and he entered Guadalajara on January 5, 1864, to receive royal honors from a grateful clergy. The French purpose, however, was to gain possession of the rich gold and silver mines in Chihuahua and Sonora, and Bazaine now directed his attack against the north. Douay and Castagny swept forward to Aguascalientes, then on to Zacatecas, and when Doblado and four thousand men tried to check their advance at Matehuala in May, destroyed him utterly. Even so, the defeat was not without compensatory values, for Doblado fled to the United States and Juárez was rid of his plotting.

Vidaurri, too, judging the cause lost, deserted to Maximilian, a defection which forced Juárez out of Saltillo into the desert, and the crushing defeat of González Ortega seemed to mark the end. This self-sufficient warrior, after the Puebla disaster, had followed

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Juárez to San Luis Potosí, where the President again insisted that he should confine himself to the office of president of the Supreme Court. Ortega returned to Zacatecas, however, assumed the governorship again, and wasted money and months in purposeless activities. When the French advanced, he retreated without giving battle, and even hurried through Durango, ignoring various appeals for aid. On September 4, 1864, he was put in command of all forces that could be assembled and not only did he suffer disastrous defeat at Majoma on the 24th, but disbanded his army without further effort at resistance. Here was disaster piled on disaster—stupidity, cowardice, and treachery joining to destroy hope—yet not one of those about him saw a sign of surrender in the bronze face of Juárez. Climbing once more into his shabby little carriage, he crossed four hundred miles of sand and sage and established his government in Chihuahua. Turcos, Nubians, and Spahis, garrisoning the captured towns, burned and killed indefatigably under the skilled direction of Dupin and Jeanningros, notorious for their bloody records in China and Algiers, and the very smell of death rose from the land.

The one encouragement came from tidings of fierce dissension in the City. Bazaine, soon seeing through the wall of lies, had the wit to realize that mere force would never crush Juárez, and with shrewd intent to placate the people, compelled the adoption of liberal policies. As the Treaty of Miramar put entire military control in French hands, Maximilian found himself dismissing his reactionary cabinet, proclaiming amnesties, and guaranteeing a free press, free speech and equality before the law. Miramón was sent to Berlin to study fortifications, and the bloody Márquez, humorously enough, was dispatched to Constantinople to see the Sultan about setting up a convent in Jerusalem. It had been Maximilian's agreement with the Pope that the Juárez laws relating to the Church should be set aside at once, particularly the nationalization of church estates, and Monseigneur Meglia, the papal nuncio, soon came to find out why faith had not been kept, bearing this letter from the Holy Father:

Your majesty is fully aware that in order effectually to remedy the

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wrongs committed against the Church by the recent revolution and to restore as soon as possible her happiness and prosperity, it is absolutely necessary that the Catholic religion, to the exclusion of any other cult, continue to be the glory and support of the Mexican nation; that the bishops have complete liberty in the exercise of their pastoral ministry; that the religious orders be reorganized and reestablished, according to the instructions and powers that We have given; that the estates of the Church and her privileges be maintained and protected; that none have authorization for the teaching or publication of false or subversive documents; that education, public or private, be supervised and led by the ecclesiastical authorities; and finally, that the chains be broken that until now have held the Church under the sovereignty and despotism of civil government.<sup>1</sup>

Poor Monseigneur Meglia was snubbed by Bazaine's order, and two weeks after his arrival a royal decree gave news that the laws of Juárez were to remain in full force. Moreover, Hapsburg pride joined French policy in dictating a sharp answer to the papal nuncio which closed with this characteristic assertion: "The Emperor and the Pope have both received directly from God their full and absolute power, each within his respective limits. Between equals there can be no subjection." Nor was clerical fury abated by the actions of the Empress, whose impatience of religious ceremonial led her into many public manifestations of an irritation that bordered on contempt. The bitterness of the Mexican hierarchy, however, had small chance for expression, as the bishops sadly realized that any open attack upon Maximilian meant the strengthening of the Republicans.

Even as he cajoled the people with his liberal policies and his studied disregard of the Church, Bazaine had been driving hard in the field, assisted, as usual, by the treachery of Mexicans still true to the Santa Anna tradition. General Cortina surrendered Matamoros to Mejía and took service with the Imperialists; Uraga and four thousand men deserted to Maximilian in June; and Lozano, the bandit chief of the Sierra Alica, joined the French for the capture of Mazatlán. Only the friendship of the United States gave hope to Juárez, arms and recruits continuing to come in regularly

<sup>1</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 73, Part I, p. 101, 1st Session, 39th Congress.

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from Texas and California. A political complication, also, rose to harass the government. When Juárez assumed the presidency on December 1, 1861, it was to serve a four-year term ending November 30, 1865. González Ortega, however, held that as Juárez had taken office in June, his term expired November 30, 1864, and when the day came, demanded that the presidency be turned over to him. Unable to gain any support for his contention, he made application for a license "to repair to the interior of the republic or elsewhere within the Mexican coast, to continue to defend with arms the independence of Mexico," but instead of carrying out his pledge, he went to New York, where he not only plotted treason with renegades, but plunged into notorious dissipations that ended with his arrest in September, 1865.

In the early months of 1865, Bazaine judged the time ripe for crushing out the few remaining sparks of rebellion. Marching to Oaxaca, he forced the surrender of Porfirio Diaz in February, after a siege of a month and a half, and from the north came news that Negrete's army had been destroyed. Confronted by an inferior French force, this habitual traitor abandoned Saltillo and Monterey, and led his men on a journey of death across the Bolsa de Mapimi, a mountain desert, finally seeking refuge for himself in the United States. Again Juárez faced the necessity of retreat, and this time the ramshackle carriage bore him from Chihuahua to Paso del Norte (now Juárez).

Once more it seemed the end, but Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April changed the face of the whole situation almost overnight. Never for one moment had the American people abated their anger at the sight of Maximilian ruling in Mexico by force of French bayonets. Doblado and Romero, visiting Grant's headquarters before Richmond in October, 1864, had been wildly acclaimed by officers and army, and Grant himself, as well as Meade, Schofield, and Butler, had offered his sword to Mexico when hostilities should cease. Even Confederate generals sent offers of men and munitions. The cause of Juárez also gained immeasurably by one of those dramatic outrages that has always had power to excite people far more deeply than any mere routine of tyranny. On October 3d, Maximilian issued a barbarous decree which branded the Repub-

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licans as criminals, subject to instant execution, and General Arteaga and his staff, taken prisoners by General Ramón Méndez and his renegades, were shot down like dogs.

The whole United States flamed into fury, and Congress caught fire, the Senate asking full information concerning "the barbarous decree of the so-called Emperor of Mexico, ordering all Mexicans, who bravely defend the sacred cause of independence, to be shot without form of trial." General Grant, asserting publicly that continued intervention was "a direct act of war against the United States," supported General Schofield's project of recruiting an army of sixty thousand to fight under the flag of Mexico, and ordered General Sheridan to give Juárez thirty thousand muskets.<sup>2</sup> General José Carbajal, Civil Governor of Tamaulipas, advanced upon Washington and New York under the attractive chaperonage of General Lew Wallace, and invited all liberty-loving Americans to join the banner of Juárez. Matias Romero, the emotional Mexican minister, burst into a blaze of enthusiasm, President Johnson approved, and only Seward had the vision to frown upon a plan that would have saddled Mexico with a new army of foreigners. As Seward saw it, the French could be forced out of Mexico by simple diplomatic pressure, and after calming the uproar in some degree, he drew out the various pledges that Louis Napoleon had given in 1862 and 1863. Straightway commenced a new diplomatic exchange, the French government attempting to evade and delay, Seward coldly emphasizing broken pledges, and peremptorily demanding "immediate evacuation."

Louis Napoleon, by the Treaty of Miramar, had bound himself to keep twenty-eight thousand men in Mexico through 1865; twenty-five thousand through 1866, and twenty thousand through 1867, and even then withdrawal was to be gradual. When General Jo Shelby and his Missourians crossed the Rio Grande after the fall of the Confederacy, and offered to recruit a force of fifty thousand Southerners for the maintenance of the Empire, Bazaine compelled refusal of the proposition, saying that Maximilian would

<sup>2</sup> Grant, in his *Memoirs*, vol. 2, p. 546, explains and justifies his views; and Louis A. Coolidge, in *Ulysses S. Grant*, pp. 205 and 245, details Grant's various plans for ending French occupation.

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always have French swords to depend upon. Now grim necessity decided Louis Napoleon to break his sworn word. Not only was the attitude of the United States to be considered, as well as the growing menace of Prussia, but the French themselves were sick of the Mexican venture. From start to finish, the Emperor had bungled the Mexican affair, sending only thirty thousand men to Mexico when he should have sent sixty thousand, and making two inadequate loans instead of instantly guaranteeing one loan sufficient for all needs. He had been duped by traitors who assured him that Mexico would welcome his troops, and by political financiers who insisted that Mexico would yield an annual income of \$40,000,000, when, as a matter of fact, the revenues never exceeded \$20,000,000. So, on January 22, 1866, the French Emperor blandly announced that as Maximilian was "firm on his throne," French troops would be withdrawn at an early date.

Under instructions from Paris, Bazaine called in his troops from the outlying provinces, where for three years they had exercised such bloody overlordship, and as Seward had foreseen, the weak foundations of empire began to crumble. Juárez divided the country into four military commands, giving the South and East to Porfirio Diaz, the North to Mariano Escobedo, the Center to Nicolas Regules and the West to Ramón Corona, and each commenced to vie with the other in the number of victories. Mazatlán was recaptured, the occupation of Hermosillo freed Sonora of the invaders, and Escobedo, with Sostenes Rocha and Gerónimo Trevino at his side, won a decisive victory in June that put Matamoros at his mercy. Even as he prepared to attack, General Carballo returned from the United States, and the wily Mejía, getting in touch with him, arranged a surrender that permitted him to depart with troops, arms and munitions. Before Escobedo's advance, however, General Douay evacuated Monterey on June 26th, Saltillo on July 4th, and the North was in the hands of Juárez.

Gone now were the plays and pageants and colorful pomp that had made Chapultepec a pleasure-palace, for Maximilian was discovering the truth of Pierre Bonaparte's *mot* that one could do anything with bayonets except to sit on them. Gone, too, was the gay Carlota's light-hearted impatience with tedious religious ceremonials,

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for even as they cut their revenue by two-thirds, so did the royal pair commence to sue humbly for the hierarchy's favor. On Holy Thursday, in the presence of a large assembly, the Emperor and Empress performed the Lavation, serving twelve men and twelve women of the common people with their own hands, and then washing their feet in an ecstasy of pious fervor. Along with these pitiful humilities they exhausted effort to cajole the French into remaining, recognizing claims in the amount of \$8,000,000, a debt of \$230,000,000, and signing a convention that virtually turned over the customs receipts of the nation. Bazaine's face was stone, and as a last desperate chance, Carlota sailed for Europe in the hope that a personal appeal might win Louis Napoleon back to his faith.

Fast and faster ran the doom of empire. The men of Juárez took Tampico in August after an eight-day attack; Corona forced French and renegades out of Guaymas on September 15th; Diaz captured Oaxaca October 31st; Ignacio Alatorre entered Jalapa November 10th; and Juárez, leaving Chihuahua, set up his government in Zacatecas. Sad, heartbreakng news from Europe added to the gloom of these reverses. Carlota, leaving Vera Cruz on July 13th, never to return, landed at Brest in a distressed mental state which was not assuaged by a humiliating wait in Paris hotel rooms. Finally summoning her to St. Cloud, the Emperor said that he could not be depended upon for further assistance and that the order for withdrawal must stand.

"I should have known who you are and who I am!" cried the wretched Empress in a voice that rang through the palace. "I should not have dishonored the blood of the Bourbons in my veins by humbling myself before a Bonaparte, who is nothing but an adventurer."

Ill and fainting, she dashed down the water offered her by the Empress Eugénie, crying out that it was poisoned. From France the unhappy woman hurried to Miramar, but word from Vienna assured her that nothing could be expected from Franz Josef. Bethinking herself of an appeal to the Pope, she journeyed to Rome, and it was in the papal presence that her reason fled entirely. Throwing a handful of chestnuts on the table, she cried, "These, with water from a fountain, are all I have had to eat and drink for twenty-four

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hours. Napoleon's agents are trying to poison me!" Until her royal relatives came from Belgium to carry her away, the mad Empress ate nothing but food prepared in her room by her maid.<sup>3</sup>

Secret instructions to Bazaine had urged him to find some subservient Mexican to put in Maximilian's place, or failing in that, to force the Emperor's abdication by way of creating a claim upon the gratitude of Juárez. Bazaine, however, was unable to find a proper Mexican substitute for Maximilian. González Ortega had been his choice, but even as the Marshal anxiously awaited his arrival, word came that he had been arrested by the American authorities while attempting to cross the Border. Porfirio Diaz also was approached, but in the midst of these secret negotiations Seward announced that the United States would not recognize any authority in Mexico save that of Benito Juárez and on the occasion of accrediting a new minister to the Juárez government, had him accompanied by no less a person than General William T. Sherman. Also receiving word that the French withdrawal had been postponed until spring, Seward wrote at once that the United States considered "next spring" as entirely too indefinite and vague, and insisting upon "immediate evacuation." November 18th, therefore, was set as the date for the sailing of the first French detachments.

Seeing now that the Emperor's abdication was the one course left open, Bazaine threw the whole weight of his powerful personality against that of Maximilian, never strong at best and further weakened by sorrow and despair. For several days the unfortunate Hapsburg wavered wretchedly, but at last pride gave way and on the night of October 21st he slipped out of the City with intent to board an Austrian man-of-war at Vera Cruz. Panic-stricken, for they knew the fate that awaited them, generals and bishops hurried in pursuit, halting him at Orizaba, and straightway commenced to beat down his purpose with pleas, lies, and pledges. The cunning Abbé Fischer, well knowing the puff-ball quality of Maximilian's mind, had taken the precaution to procure a letter from Carlota be-

<sup>3</sup> A château at Bouchout, a village near Brussels, became her home, and during the Great War this notice hung from the iron gates: "This residence, the property of the Belgian Crown, is occupied by her Majesty the Empress of Mexico, the sister-in-law of our great and revered ally the Emperor of Austria. German soldiers are ordered to pass by, not to sing, and to leave the place untouched."

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fore her departure, and this he now produced. In it the Empress recited the glorious history of the Hapsburgs, painted the humiliation of flight, the shame of having to beg refuge of Franz Josef, and by the memory of his heroic ancestors abjured him never to desert his post.

Miramón and Márquez, returning from Europe at this very moment, promised the formation of an "invincible army" and the Church came forward with offers of millions for munitions and supplies. As a consequence, Bazaine's messengers were rebuffed, and General Castelnau, coming up from Vera Cruz with direct word from Louis Napoleon as to the wisdom of abdication, also had the door shut in his face. On December 1st the Emperor, drunk with the wine of words, issued a bombastic proclamation declaring that he would "continue at the helm until the last drop of my blood be shed in defense of the nation." Still another stated that there would be convoked at once "a national congress on the most ample and liberal basis" to decide "whether the empire shall continue in the future," and if so, to assist "in framing fundamental laws."

Merchants and clergy and renegades joined to give the Emperor a triumphal entry into the City on January 5th, and as if to repay some of the humiliations received from Bazaine, Maximilian set up a reactionary government presided over by Teodosia Lares and others that the French marshal most despised. The ministers of France, Prussia, Spain, Belgium, Great Britain, and Italy joined in an unavailing protest to Maximilian against his cabinet and his generals, pointing out that Lares, as a minister under Santa Anna, had been indicted for stealing from the Treasury; that Bonilla had embezzled public funds; and that Márquez and Miramón had not only robbed the British legation, but "were proved responsible for the cold blooded assassination committed at Tacubaya in April, 1859, upon beardless youths, philanthropic physicians and pacific citizens." These protests were contemptuously disregarded, and with Abbé Fischer at his back, whispering orders disguised as suggestions, the Emperor flew his golden beard to the breeze, and actually watched the French depart as though their sailing marked his deliverance.

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Only one brought up to believe in the theory of divine right could have been deceived as to the real state of affairs. The expenses of government were three times the revenue, even excluding the French payments, and army conditions were no less desperate than the nation's finances. Instead of taking advantage of the French occupation to build up an efficient force of renegades and mercenaries, well-equipped and competently led, Maximilian had devoted his energies to laying out broad avenues, designing decorations, writing court manuals, and mooning at Cuernavaca. At Orizaba he accepted figures that showed thirty-five thousand men in the three army corps to be commanded by Márquez, Miramón, and Mejía, when common sense should have told him that not half the number could be induced to take the field in support of a losing cause. Truly, as Douay said of him, he was "of all princes the most idiotic and imbecile." The hopelessness of things stood proved before Bazaine sailed. On January 28th, Miramón marched against Zacatecas with his "invincible army," and after being beaten back with terrible loss, was crushingly defeated at San Jacinto by Escobedo, and forced to seek refuge in Queretaro with Mejía. Within a week only the Capital and this provincial city flew the flag of the Empire. Seeing things as they were at last, Maximilian summoned Shelby from Cordoba and asked him to rally his countrymen, but the Confederate general shook his head.

"I am sorry," he said, "but Your Majesty has come to a realization of the truth when hope no longer offers aid. It is not a single sword you need. Twenty thousand, aye, forty thousand, would have hard work to save you. A year ago—yes—but not to-day. The citizen soldiers of Juárez have learned their trade, and they have that conviction of invincibility that comes from successive victories. If I may speak frankly, your problem is no longer the retention of power, but the safety of your person. Gather about you such men as you can trust—God knows they will be few enough—and cut your way to Vera Cruz. The deck of your royal brother's warship is the only safe footing I can see for you."<sup>4</sup>

Black brooding let this opportunity pass, and, barred from Vera Cruz, the Emperor left for Queretaro on February 13th, announc-

<sup>4</sup> *Shelby's Expedition into Mexico*, by Major John N. Edwards.

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ing that he would place himself at the head of the army, supported by the "valiant" General Márquez, the "gallant" General Miramón, the "intrepid" General Mejía, the "distinguished" General Méndez, and the "patriotic" General Vidaurri, ending with ". . . let us confide in God who protects and will continue to protect Mexico!" With him marched eighteen hundred men; three thousand were with Miramón and Mejía, and on the 25th Méndez came in from Michoacán with four thousand, making a total of eighty-eight hundred with which to prop the tottering walls of empire. Miramón wished to strike at once before the patriot army could concentrate in full strength, but Márquez overruled him, and without any interference whatsoever General Escobedo was permitted to bring up twenty-five thousand men for the siege. In the lovely old city, with the sparkling waters of the San Juan giving gardens and orchards to every inch of the valley, Maximilian idled the days away, issuing orders only to rescind them, and spending most of the time with his diary on the Hill of the Bells.

Two fierce assaults were beaten back, and twice Miramón led victorious sallies, but each day saw Escobedo's iron ring draw tighter, and on March 15th Márquez and Vidaurri were sent with a small detachment through the lines with instructions to obtain all possible aid from the City and return at once. Continued fighting and daily desertion reduced the garrison to five thousand effectives, lack of provisions menaced soldiers and civilians with famine, and as days passed without word from Márquez, the conviction grew that he had betrayed them. Nothing remained but flight, and after many changes, the night of May 15th was decided upon. In the small hours of the 14th Miguel López, colonel of the Empress's Own, more loved and trusted by Maximilian than any other Mexican officer, slipped out of the City to the tent of Escobedo and entered into a pact of betrayal. Taking advantage of his position as Officer of the Day, he brought in the Republicans under the guise of relief troops, and stationed them at every strategic point.

Money, his own life, and the life of the Emperor figured among the considerations. In an effort to blacken the name of the unfortunate Hapsburg, the charge was made afterward that López acted

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under the Emperor's direction, but not only have the alleged documents been exposed as forgeries, Maximilian's own conduct gave the lie to the story. Aroused by the ringing of the bells, he rushed down from his quarters in the Convent de la Cruz, and, grasping the situation immediately, called an order to make for the Hill of the Bells. The Republican soldiers, under instructions, made no movement to capture him, and López followed close with a saddled horse, urging his escape, but the Emperor returned a furious refusal. Mejía and a few hundreds reached the hill, then word came that Miramón and Méndez had been captured. As the rising sun disclosed Escobedo's advancing thousands, Maximilian saw the futility of resistance and ordered a white flag to be shown.

By the rules of war that he himself had laid down—the barbarous decree of October 3, 1865—Maximilian could have been executed summarily, but the vengeance of Juárez stopped with the shooting of Méndez, slayer of Arteaga. Maximilian, Mejía, and Miramón were imprisoned and held for court martial, and no action whatsoever was taken against the four hundred and more officers and the captured rank and file. It was during the twenty days allowed for the employment of counsel and the preparation of the case, that Princess Salm-Salm appeared upon the scene. The beautiful young American, wife of an Austrian soldier of fortune who had drifted into Mexico to offer his sword to Maximilian, had been a circus rider before her marriage and not even association with royalty had robbed her of courage and decision. More resolute than any of the men, she went to San Luis Potosí to beg mercy of Juárez, and noted his "black, piercing eyes," the general air of "a man who reflects much and deliberates long and carefully before acting." Her plea was refused, and Lerdo—"fair, with blue eyes and exquisite manners," was no less obdurate. Nothing daunted, she planned an escape for the night of June 2d, but at the last moment Maximilian decided to await the arrival of his counsel. Juárez now allowed an additional nine days for the preparation of the defense, and again the indefatigable Princess planned an escape, bribing the officers of the guard, but one weakened and betrayed the plot to Escobedo. Still others were planned, but all came to nothing and

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Mejía, offered liberty by Escobedo, whose life he had once spared, would not desert the Emperor.<sup>5</sup>

The trial of Maximilian was held in the Teatro Iturbide, now a shabby moving-picture house, and the prosecution rested its case principally upon the decree of October 3d and the fact that Maximilian, by force of foreign arms, had attempted to seize Mexico and destroy its free institutions. The defense denied the jurisdiction of a military tribunal, and when the protest was overruled, cited the election that had called Maximilian to the throne. The decree of October 3d was declared to be entirely the work of Bazaine, the Emperor having signed it only upon the Marshal's solemn assurance that Juárez had fled to the United States, leaving behind him scattered banditti. It was time wasted, for Maximilian's death was a national necessity, and at midnight on the 14th, the three men were found guilty and duly sentenced.<sup>6</sup>

Plain people may suffer every pain of life through the operations of tyranny—dying by the tens of thousands from the sword, the bullet, hunger, or poverty—and the world goes about its business placidly enough, but let king or emperor be called to account for his crimes and the heart of humanity bursts with pity. Maximilian's mad vanity had drenched a nation in blood, costing the lives of eighty-five thousand Mexicans, not counting the women and children who perished of pestilence and famine; cities were in ruins and a country desolated because of him—and yet when his own life was matched against this vast array of sheetless dead, a wave of anguish swept all Europe. Every foreign representative entered solemn protest against the “crime,” Victor Hugo and Garibaldi joining the chorus, and even Seward asked clemency, but this was the answer of Juárez to all appeals:

The death of Maximilian is the death of the spirit of foreign intervention, which, under leniency, will revive again and organize new armies under the pretext of saving the Mexican people, but in reality to bring another usurper to Mexico. It is necessary that the existence

<sup>5</sup> *Ten Years of My Life*, by Princess Felix Salm-Salm.

<sup>6</sup> A complete account of the trial may be found in *Invasion of Mexico by the French and Reign of Maximilian I*, by Frederic Hall, an American prominent in the counsel for the defense.

## The End of Empire

of Mexico as an independent nation be not left to the good will of foreign potentates; it is necessary also that the reform, progress and freedom of the Mexican people be not hampered and jeopardized by some European sovereign, who, in patronage of the so-called Emperor of Mexico, might plan to regulate the degree of slavery or liberty of the Mexican people to suit his own taste. The return of Maximilian to Europe would be used in the hands of the enemies of Mexico as a weapon for the restoration of a régime disastrous to the democratic institutions of this country. For fifty years Mexico has used a system of pardon and leniency with a resultant anarchy at home and loss of prestige abroad. Never thus can the Republic be consolidated.

On June 19th, at six o'clock in the morning, the three prisoners and their confessors were taken from the convent of the Capuchines and driven to the Hill of the Bells. Maximilian commended Miramón's wife and children to his royal mother and Mejía made Escobedo the guardian of his son. After exchanging embraces, the doomed men set their backs against a shattered wall, and whatever quarrel may be had with their lives, all died nobly. Miramón denied treason in a brief statement, asserting that he had only defended his opinions, and Maximilian, finishing with the distribution of some gold pieces to his executioners, took this characteristic farewell of earth: "Persons of my rank and birth are brought into the world either to insure the welfare of the people or to die as martyrs. I did not come to Mexico from motives of ambition. I came at the earnest entreaty of those who desired the welfare of the country. Mexicans! I pray that my blood may be the last to be shed for our unhappy country, and may it insure the happiness of the nation. Mexicans! Long live Mexico!" Only Mejía spoke no word, his bronzed face set in granite. Maximilian, placing his hand over his heart, gave the word to fire, and a crash of rifles ended Europe's dream of empire in the Western World.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Princess Salm-Salm, given life and liberty, requited by publishing the lie that "the body of the Emperor was held by the Republican government for a base speculation." (Queretaro: *Leaves from My Day Book in Mexico*.) Poor embalming, however, robbed the head and face of hair and beard, and black glass eyes completed the ghastly caricature handed over to the Austrian representative on November 10th.

## 24: The Monroe Doctrine and the Empire

**F**EW things have been more misunderstood in Mexico than the attitude of Lincoln and Seward. Branded at the time as indifferent, even callous, this belief has hardened into conviction and even so fair a historian as Sierra refuses to recognize the difficulties of the United States, or to make a just estimate of Seward's brilliant diplomacy. Much of the original misunderstanding was due to the reports of Matias Romero, the Mexican minister in Washington. Lerdo, in biting fashion, once described him as "the most famous fool in Mexico . . . to lawyers he will talk about finance and to financiers of the law; to diplomats he will discourse on architecture and to architects upon diplomacy. And if no person understand him, every one cries out his fame." An able man in many ways, and an ardent patriot, Romero's chief fault was a blind, unreasoning emotionalism that robbed him of ability to think clearly or act wisely. His letters to Juárez, read to-day, are curious jumbles of gossip, speculation, fury, and suspicion, lacking at all times in accurate estimation, and almost laughable for the manner in which he changed his views and recommendations.

At the time of the Allies' decision to invade Mexico—October 31, 1861—the North still reeled under the shock of overwhelming defeat at Bull Run, while the French advance in May, 1862 found Washington in despair over McClellan's inability to cope with the bewildering strategy of Lee, Jackson, and Stuart. Great Britain, France, and Spain, openly sympathetic with the South, were only waiting for a fair chance to recognize the Confederacy, and any overt aid to Mexico would have been seized upon as justification for such a course. "We cannot deviate a single soldier from our army or a single dollar from our treasury until the war has terminated," Seward told Romero, but gave promise that when the South was whipped, fullest aid would be forthcoming. Until that time, President Juárez must realize their inabilities. All that they said fell on deaf ears, for Romero's mind was closed. Going over the heads of

## The Monroe Doctrine and the Empire

Lincoln and Seward, he appealed directly to the Senate, but Blair and Sumner, as a matter of course, merely reiterated the impossibility of assistance until the end of war. Whereupon Romero fell into a rage, and came to regard Lincoln, Seward and the whole Republican party as "Mexico's greatest enemies, capable of any felonious assault upon her liberties."

Viewed fairly, Seward pursued the only course that could have been pursued. Barred from armed action by domestic peril, he addressed himself to the task of preparing a plain, sequential record that could be produced when the United States should be in position to support the Monroe Doctrine by the sword. The annals of diplomacy show no more brilliant victory than that won by the Secretary of State, for not only did he prevent recognition of the South by the European powers, but he did so without surrendering a single vital principle. The duel of pens commenced on March 3, 1862, when Seward, in a circular letter to the American representatives in Europe, stated that the United States had been given, and had accepted, the pledge of the Allies that they had "no intention of interfering to procure a change in the constitutional form of government now existing in Mexico . . . or any political change which should be in opposition to the will of the Mexican people."

Hearing of the plan to put a European prince on a Mexican throne, Seward wrote to Mr. Dayton, the minister to France, asking him to ascertain the truth of the rumor, saying ". . . we have more than once, and with perfect distinctness and candor, informed all the parties to the Alliance that we cannot look with indifference upon any armed European intervention for political ends in a country situated so near and connected with us so closely as Mexico." France, replying that she waged war only to redress open injuries, boldly challenged the United States to make objection, but Seward escaped the trap by blandly admitting that "France has a right to make war against Mexico, and to determine for herself the cause." In the same note, however—June 21st—he reaffirmed the American position, saying, "We have a right to insist that France shall not improve the war she makes to raise up in Mexico an anti-republican or anti-American government, or to maintain such government there." Having thus committed France to pledges that she

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would not interfere with Mexico's government, and with formal protest duly made against the repudiation of these pledges, Seward filed the record until the day when action could be taken.

The whole purpose of Seward's policy was lost on Romero, and by 1863 he had reached a pitch of anger where he wanted Juárez to sever diplomatic relations, and when this suggestion was rejected, resigned in a huff. Before leaving, however, he made arrangements with Senator McDougal of California to introduce a resolution declaring war on France. The resolution was killed, as a matter of course, and the only result was to arouse Seward to new anger against Romero as an irresponsible, mischief-making meddler. In October, however, when Romero returned, Seward received him courteously enough, if not warmly, and pointed to Grant's victory at Vicksburg as proof that the war would soon be over. In April, 1864, Congress grew excited over Maximilian's approaching coronation, and passed a joint resolution that establishment of a monarchial form of government by force in Mexico was regarded as a blow to the dignity and security of popular governments, and that the silence of the United States must not be regarded as an endorsement.

Louis Napoleon instantly accepted this as a belligerent act, but the wily Seward prevented serious consequences by a disavowal, and while admitting that "the resolution truly interprets the unanimous sentiment of the people of the United States," pointed out that such matters were solely under authority of the President, and that no change of policy was contemplated. He earned a Congressional reprimand but robbed France of an excuse for recognizing the South. As Seward wrote to John Bigelow, Dayton's successor, on May 21, 1864, "We have compromised nothing, surrendered nothing . . . but why should we gasconade about Mexico when we are in a struggle for our own life?"<sup>1</sup>

Never happy without a nightmare of some sort, Romero now conceived the idea that Seward meant to recognize Maximilian. Besides the fact that Seward's consistent refusals are a matter of record, there is not a scrap of evidence that he ever contemplated any such course. On October 22, 1864, he told Romero and Doblado that not only

<sup>1</sup> The full correspondence is given in *House Executive Document*, No. 1, 1st Session, 39th Congress.

## The Monroe Doctrine and the Empire

would he continue to refuse recognition to Maximilian, but that the United States, at the conclusion of its Civil War, would not rest until every foreign soldier was out of Mexico. In spite of this plain evidence, uncontradicted by anything more tangible than rumor, Romero continued to deluge Juárez with his disturbing accusations and ugly suspicions.

As an example of his irresponsibility, one of his reports contained this jumble of contradictory recommendations: When the United States offered aid at the end of the Civil War, military and pecuniary assistance must not be accepted, as it would mean the cession of Sonora, Lower California and Tehuantepec. Could he instruct Doblado, as a private citizen, to offer Seward Lower California and part of Sonora in return for a promise not to recognize Maximilian? Since Maximilian meant to give Mexican territory to the French in return for their aid, why not give this territory to the United States for men and money? Or, on second thought, perhaps it would be better to let Napoleon keep the territory and establish a buffer state between Mexico and the United States, thereby escaping the degrading superiority of a powerful neighbor. One moment he protested against any embargo on the shipment of arms into Mexico, and in the next demanded an embargo.

As has been mentioned in the previous chapter, Lee's surrender at Appomattox released all the bitterness of the United States against the French occupation of Mexico. Congress thundered, General Grant openly urged war, Governor Carbajal called for recruits<sup>2</sup> and General Schofield commenced the formation of an army of sixty thousand with purpose to march across the Rio Grande. Only Seward had the vision to see the consequences of the mad proposal. Once let an American army gain foothold in Mexico and it would draw to its banners the countless thousands of discharged soldiers, Union and Confederate, who had no taste for civil pursuits after four years of war. What guarantee was there that these men would leave the country when their usefulness was over? Why run this

<sup>2</sup> Romero, writing to Seward on April 20, 1867, said plainly that Carbajal had authority from Juárez to accept the military services of 10,000 foreigners, to purchase arms and munitions, to contract a foreign loan, and to pledge the public revenues of Tamaulipas as security. (*House Executive Document No. 33, 1st Session, 40th Congress.*)

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desperate chance of new and irresponsible masters when there was no need?

Romero, as usual, saw no farther than the immediate present, and audaciously commenced to plot for Seward's removal, a silly business which might have had serious consequences but for Seward's magnanimity. Overlooking Romero's obvious conspiracy, he addressed himself to the task of quieting American opinion. First convincing Grant that his course was unwise, he played upon the vanity of Schofield by persuading him that his brilliant abilities could be most conspicuously displayed in Paris. "I want you to get your legs under Napoleon's mahogany and tell him that he must get out of Mexico," said Seward, and the simple-minded soldier sailed to France without any other credentials than a hearty slap on the back. His hands free, Seward now reached into the files and drew forth the record.

On September 6, 1865, Seward wrote Bigelow that France's continuance in Mexico was a "future, if not an immediate antagonism between the policies of the two nations." This warning was repeated more urgently on September 20th and November 6th; on December 6th, Seward addressed the Marquis de Montholon, French Minister at Washington, urging withdrawal, and on the 16th, Seward wrote Bigelow to ascertain the exact date of withdrawal, as friendship "would be brought into imminent jeopardy unless France could deem it consistent with her interest and honor to desist from the prosecution of armed intervention in Mexico, to overthrow the domestic republican government existing there, and to establish upon its ruins the foreign monarchy which has been attempted to be inaugurated in the capital of the country, leaving Mexico the free enjoyment of the republican government they have established for themselves, and of their adhesion to which have given what seems to the United States to be decisive and conclusive as well as touching proofs."<sup>2</sup>

In January, 1866, Louis Napoleon announced that troops would be withdrawn "at an early date," but at the same time, Marquis de Montholon was instructed to gain some assurance from the United

<sup>2</sup> Complete correspondence, *House Executive Document*, No. 1, 1st Session, 39th Congress.

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States as to the recognition of Maximilian, or at least a pledge that his continuance in power would not be resented or interfered with. Seward's answer specifically refused this request and demanded in the most peremptory fashion that the date of withdrawal be announced at once and definitely. He denounced the war as one "of political intervention dangerous to the United States and to republican institutions in the American hemisphere." And continuing, he said:

The United States have not claimed, and they do not claim, to know what arrangements the Emperor may make for the adjustment of claims for indemnity and redress in Mexico. It would be, on our part, an act of intervention to take cognizance of them. We adhere to our position that the war in question has become a political war between France and the republic of Mexico, injurious and dangerous to the United States and to the republican cause, and we ask only that in that aspect and character it may be brought to an end. It would be illiberal on the part of the United States to suppose that, in desiring our pursuing preliminary arrangements, the Emperor contemplates the establishment in Mexico, before withdrawing his forces, of the very institutions which constitute the material ground of the exceptions taken against his intervention by the United States. It would be still more illiberal to suppose for a moment that he expects the United States to bind themselves indirectly to acquiesce in or support the obnoxious institutions. . . . We cannot understand his appeal to us for an assurance that we ourselves will abide by our principles of non-intervention in any other sense than as the expression, in a friendly way, of his expectation that when the people of Mexico shall have been left absolutely free from the operation, effects and consequences of his own political and military intervention, we will ourselves respect their self-established sovereignty and independence. . . . Looking simply towards the point to which our attention has been steadily confined, the relief of the Mexican embarrassments without disturbing our relations with France, we shall be gratified when the Emperor shall give to us, either through the channel of your esteemed correspondence or otherwise, definitive information of the time when French military operations may be expected to cease in Mexico.

On April 6th, therefore, Drouyn de Lhuys informed Bigelow that "The Emperor has decided that the French troops shall quit

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Mexico in three detachments. The first is to leave in November, 1866; the second in March, 1867, and the third in November of that same year." Seward replied at once that there must be greater speed, as delay must "necessarily be regarded with concern and apprehension," and almost in the same breath delivered an ultimatum to Austria. The Emperor Franz Josef, more out of Hapsburg pride than any love for Maximilian, was gathering Austrian mercenaries to take the place of French troops in Mexico, and on April 6th Seward wrote Minister Motley that this was "an act of war by Austria against the Republic of Mexico, and in regard to such war, the United States could not engage to remain as silent or neutral spectators." Motley mailed back a protest against delivering such an ultimatum, but Seward repeated his instructions, adding, "If Austria persists, withdraw at once." \* Franz Josef did not persist.

On July 26th, Maximilian, in a slavish attempt to curry favor with France, appointed General Osmont as Secretary of War, and named M. Friant to a cabinet position in charge of the finances. Whereupon the vigilant Seward addressed vigorous protest to the Marquis de Montholon under date of August 16th, stating that:

"The President thinks it proper that the Emperor of France should be informed that the assumption of administrative functions at this time by the aforenamed officers of the French expeditionary corps under the authority of the Prince Maximilian is not unlikely to be injurious to good relations between the United States and France, because it is liable to be regarded by the Congress and people of the United States as indicating a course of proceedings on the part of France incongruous with the engagement which has been made for the withdrawal of the French expeditionary corps from that country." \* Another act of Maximilian was to declare that Matamoros and all other ports in the hands of Juárez were closed to foreign and coasting traffic, and on August 17th President Johnson issued a proclamation refusing to be bound by the decree, calling it "null and void." Driving ahead even more vigorously, Lewis D. Campbell was accredited to the Juárez government on

\* *House Executive Document*, No. 1, 1st Session, 39th Congress.

\* *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2nd Session, 39th Congress, vol. 3, p. 381.

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October 20th, and to make his journey the more impressive, General William T. Sherman was assigned to accompany him.

Forced to accept these humiliations, the French Emperor was still possessed of a purpose to evade, and he held a strategic position which gave him ample leeway for the repudiation of his pledges to Seward. Although the north and south had been given up, the cities and towns of the Mexican plateau, containing seventy-five per cent. of the population and wealth, were in French hands, constituting an actual control of the country. While giving the appearance of evacuating, Bazaine had merely concentrated, and in the event of some turn of affairs in the United States that would distract attention from Mexico, the French plan could be resumed at once. In October, therefore, Louis Napoleon announced that evacuation would be delayed "until spring." Seward instantly wrote "demanding" the reasons, and Bigelow replied as follows on November 8th:<sup>6</sup>

The Emperor said that it was true that he had concluded to postpone the recall of troops until spring, but that in doing so, he had been influenced by entirely military considerations. At the time he gave the order, the successors of the dissidents, supported as they were by large reinforcements from the United States, seemed to render any reduction of his force there perilous to those who remained behind. He accordingly sent a telegraph to Marshal Bazaine, who had already embarked a regiment (eighty-first, I think he said), but which had fortunately been prevented from sailing by unfavorable winds, directing him to embark no troops until all were ready to come. This despatch, his Majesty said, was not sent in cipher, that no secret might be made of its tenor in the United States. The troops were then disembarked, and returned to Orizaba. His Majesty went on to say that he sent General Castelnau to Mexico about the same time, charged to inform Maximilian that France could not give him another cent of money nor another man; if he thought he could sustain himself there alone, France would not withdraw her troops faster than had been stipulated for by Mr. Drouyn de Dhuys, should such be his desire; but, if on the other hand, he was disposed to abdicate, which was the course his Majesty counselled him to take, General Castelnau was charged to find some government with which to treat for the protection of French

<sup>6</sup> *House Executive Document*, No. 30, 1st Session, 40th Congress.

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interests, and to bring all the army home in the spring. I then explained to him again briefly the grave inconveniences liable to result from any unexplained departure from the stipulations already given in his Majesty's name to the world.

Replying on November 23d, Seward said:

The Emperor's decision to modify the existing arrangement without any understanding with the United States, so as to leave the whole French army in Mexico for the present instead of withdrawing one detachment in November current, as promised, is now found in every way inconvenient and exceptionable. We cannot acquiesce:

First, Because we have no authority for stating to Congress and to the American people that we have now a better guarantee for the withdrawal of the whole expeditionary force in the spring than we have heretofore had for the withdrawal of a part in November.

Second, Because the term "next spring," as appointed for the entire evacuation, is indefinite and vague.

Third, In full reliance upon at least a literal performance of the Emperor's existing agreement, we have taken measures, while facilitating the anticipated French evacuation, to coöperate with the republican government of Mexico for promoting the pacification of that country and for the early and complete restoration of the proper constitutional authority of that government. As a part of those measures, Mr. Campbell, our newly appointed minister, attended by Lieutenant General Sherman, has been sent to Mexico in order to confer with President Juárez on subjects which are deeply interesting to the United States, and of vital importance to Mexico.

Our policy and measures thus adopted in full reliance upon the anticipated beginning of the evacuation of Mexico were promptly made known to the French legation here, and doubtless you have already executed your instructions by making them known to the Emperor's government in Paris. The Emperor will perceive that we cannot now recall Mr. Campbell, nor can we modify the instructions under which he is expected to treat, and under which he may even now be treating with the republican government of Mexico. That government will, of course, most earnestly desire and confidently expect an early and entire discontinuation of foreign hostile occupation. You will, therefore, state to the Emperor's government that the President sincerely hopes and expects that the evacuation of Mexico will be carried in effect with such conformity to the existing agreement as the inopportune complication which calls for this despatch shall allow.

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This vigorous language not only hurried Louis Napoleon into action but inspired even greater speed than had been promised. The first detachments sailed December 22d, the second group in January, and the third and last in February, nine months sooner than had been originally pledged. Thus was Seward's diplomacy brought to a brilliantly successful conclusion without the use of armed forces that would have burdened Mexico with additional foreign levies.

Even allowing for Romero's irresponsibility, it is impossible to find any base for his continual charges that Seward was not friendly to Juárez. It was not only that Seward's policy drove the French out of Mexico, but at all times his unflinching adherence to Juárez constituted the principal strength of the republican cause. Even when it seemed certain that persistence in this attitude would drive France and England to recognize the Confederate States, Seward refused to recede from his position, and against every temptation to desert Juárez, remained steadfast. If there had been enmity in his heart, or even coldness, it would have had ample chance for expression when political exigencies put Juárez in the position of retaining the presidency illegally. On November 8, 1865, at the time when Seward was just beginning to launch his diplomatic assault on Louis Napoleon, the term of Juárez came to its end, and this decree was issued: "In the present condition of the war, it becomes necessary to extend and are hereby extended, the functions of the President of the republic beyond the time ordinarily limited by the constitution, until such a period at which the executive government can be turned over to a President duly elected at an election, which shall be held whenever the conditions of the war shall admit of its being held constitutionally."

There was, to be sure, no question as to the physical impossibility of an election, and Ortega, next in succession, had been out of the country for a year, nevertheless considerable excitement arose over what many considered an unconstitutional act. Guillermo Prieto, long a member of the Juárez cabinet, resigned in protest, General Negrete deserted, and Ortega himself, rushing from New York to San Antonio, issued a manifesto in which he arraigned Juárez for every treachery and neglect. It was an unfortunate moment for internal discord, and might have had serious consequences but for

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Seward's prompt action. A representative of Maximilian was in Washington at the time, and Seward publicly served notice that no reception would be granted to him, coupling this open rejection with the plain announcement that the United States approved the action of Juárez, and would not recognize any other.<sup>7</sup>

Ortega, checkmated, crept back to New York, and the politicians of Mexico fell into thoughtful silence. Again in November, 1866, Seward interfered to crush a plot which might have destroyed Juárez. It will be remembered that Bazaine was plotting to find a friendly Mexican to put in place of Maximilian, and as a result of secret correspondence, Ortega set out for Mexico, intending to assert his claim to the presidency by force of French money and mercenaries. Prieto, Negrete, García de la Cadena and many others were in the plot, but it fell to pieces when General Sheridan arrested the flamboyant Ortega as he was about to cross to Matamoros, clapping him into jail for a violation of the neutrality laws.

Santa Anna, no less than Ortega, was another element of discord whom Seward eliminated. This arch-traitor, an exile from the country that he had dragged to ruin, was among the first to indorse Maximilian, and had hastened to Mexico immediately after the royal arrival. He was not allowed to land until he signed a paper recognizing the intervention and the Empire, and pledging himself to issue no manifestoes. This he did, and then, in the most cringing manner, begged for an office. When it was not forthcoming he attempted to intrigue and was expelled by Bazaine. On June 5, 1866, he appeared in New York, and with his usual impudence issued an appeal to the Mexican people stating his willingness to accept the position of general-in-chief of the republican armies, although a "stranger to the ambition of vulgar souls." Also, "notwithstanding my natural repugnance to speak of myself," he used several thousand words in describing his achievements and ended by crying: "I only seek for my tomb a new laurel tree." As openly and contemptuously as possible, Seward refused to see the wretched mountebank, and Santa Anna left the country, broken, despised and discredited.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Minister Corwin was an open partisan of Maximilian and Bazaine by this time, and had the effrontery to urge Seward to receive the Empire's agent.

<sup>8</sup> The full exchange of letters may be found in *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 39th Congress, Second Session, vol. 3, pp. 222-235. Santa Anna, attempting to reenter

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Faith in a man and fealty to a cause could not have been shown more clearly than Seward's instructions to Minister Campbell on October 25th: "You are accredited to the republican government of Mexico of which Mr. Juárez is President," he wrote. "Your communications as such representative will be made to him, wheresoever he may be, and in no event will you officially recognize either the Prince Maximilian, who claims to be emperor, or any other person, chief or combination. It may possibly happen that the President of the Republic of Mexico may desire the good offices of the United States, or some effective proceeding on our part to favor and advance the pacification of a country so long distracted by foreign combined with civil war," and to this end Campbell was authorized to make such disposition of the American land and naval forces as Juárez might wish.<sup>9</sup> And again in January, 1867, when Louis Napoleon attempted a last flourish, proposing a provisional government from which both Maximilian and Juárez should be excluded, Seward sternly rejected the suggestion, again affirming his faith in Juárez as the one legal source of executive power in Mexico.<sup>10</sup>

Never was there plainer proof of deep, consistent friendship, sympathy, and assistance. Barred by the Civil War from any active aid in the beginning, the United States risked European recognition of the Confederacy by unbending affirmation of the Monroe Doctrine, and an equally unyielding support of Juárez and the republican cause. After Appomattox it was well within Seward's power to have dealt with Louis Napoleon in such manner as to have stalled a puppet president willing to distribute Mexico's resources in return for protection, but instead of that, war-wrecked America dared conflict with France by stern demands for quick and unconditional evacuation. Even as France was cowed into withdrawal, so were the forces of treason in Mexico robbed of their power for harm by repeated assurances that the United States stood like iron in support of Benito Juárez.

Mexico in 1867, was banished by Juárez, and it was not until 1874 that Diaz permitted his return. For two years he fulminated and plotted, headed only by hangers-on, and died in 1876.

<sup>9</sup> *Diplomatic Correspondence*, 2nd Session, 39th Congress, vol. 3, p. 4.

<sup>10</sup> Memorandum of conversation between Seward and M. Berthelmy, January 17, 1867. *House Executive Document*, No. 30, 1st Session, 40th Congress.

## 25: From Juárez to Diaz

On June 19th, almost at the moment when Maximilian faced a firing-squad on the Hill of the Bells, the City of Mexico surrendered to Porfirio Diaz. Márquez, on reaching the Capital, had spent precious days strutting and stealing, and then, instead of returning to the relief of Queretaro, marched off to Puebla. Diaz had been before this city since March 9th, making no real effort for its capture, but news of the coming of Márquez spurred him to action and he delivered a successful assault on the night of April 2d. After issuing a proclamation calling on "the whole nation and posterity" to perpetuate his heroic achievement, he led his army in the direction of the Capital, and met Márquez on the way.

Half of the Imperialist army deserted to Diaz at once, and the other half fled, the "Tiger of Tacubaya" outdistancing the fleetest. Besieging the City with the same caution that had marked his siege of Puebla, not even twenty thousand troops from Queretaro could impel Diaz to action. Meanwhile Márquez and General O'Horan took turns trying to make terms of betrayal, and the citizens and garrison starved. Finally, on June 19th, Márquez robbed the Treasury of its remaining gold and slipped away, leaving the citizens an opportunity to surrender, of which they took quick advantage. Vidaurri and O'Horan, less fortunate than Márquez, were dragged from hiding and summarily shot.

The President, entering the City on July 15th, faced exactly the same problems that had confronted Herrera in 1847. There was the difference, however, that whereas Herrera had compromised, temporized, and evaded, Juárez grappled boldly with every difficulty that beset him. One of his first acts was to reduce the army from sixty thousand to twenty thousand, with blunt announcement of still further reductions in the near future, and he followed this by sweeping reforms that ridded every governmental department of thieves and incompetents. Mexicans, he said, had shown the

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world that they stood ready to die in defense of free institutions. What must now be proved was the willingness to *live* for them. The treasons of peace were no less shameful than the treasons of war, and there must be an end to the habitual conception of public office as a license to steal. A great standing army had no place in a democracy, for, aside from its continuance of the military spirit, there was the waste in money and man-power. Reconstruction called for every cent of the public funds; schools, railroads, highways, reclamation projects, irrigation and the development of natural resources were imperative necessities if the pledges of the Constitution were to be redeemed. The test of patriotism was no longer a readiness to fight, but the willingness to *work*.

The truth of it all was so obvious that open protest could not be made, but the bitterness of the military and office-holding classes found expression in a violent attack upon Juárez for alleged violation of the Constitutional provision against reëlection. War, as a matter of course, had suspended every civil process, particularly elections; for six years Juárez had been a fugitive, sustaining the faith of a people by sheer courage and indomitable resolve, yet now they cried out against him as though he had not stirred from the Palace since 1858. The answer of Juárez was the calling of an election for October, under such guarantees as would permit the people free expression of opinion. He announced his own candidacy as one who had not yet been given opportunity to put his policies into effect owing to the years of battle and exile; Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada entered the field as the leader of those who believed that the principle of non-reëlection was superior to any national necessity; and General Diaz presented his name to the people as the avowed champion of the professional-soldier class, the one plank in his platform being a frank declaration that those who fought had earned the right to rule.

In addition to being asked to choose a President, the people were asked to decide whether the chief executive should have the power of a suspensive veto on all acts of Congress—to be overcome only by a two-thirds majority—and whether priests and other ecclesiastics, politically disfranchised and excluded from office by the Laws of Reform, should still be barred from serving as deputies in

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the Congress. Every question was answered in the affirmative, and Juárez was continued in office by an overwhelming majority. Lerdo de Tejada was chosen to be Chief Justice and Diaz was repudiated by the smallness of his vote. At the opening of Congress in December, Juárez publicly expressed the nation's gratitude to the people and government of the United States. All questions of claims were referred to a joint commission, and America's energetic interest was soon responsible for the restoration of friendly relations with Italy, Prussia, and Spain. With what seemed a free hand, the President turned to the gigantic task of lifting the nation out of the depths of misery into which it had been plunged by war.

Peace, however, was the last thought of the Praetorians, and since the people had denied them power, what remained but the old appeal to force? Had they not overthrown governments in the past? Why not now? Straightway various garrisons mutinied in Michoacán, Sinaloa, and Puebla, and were joined by many of the soldiers who had been returned to civil life. What the army failed to take into consideration was not alone the character of the President, but also the new temper of Mexico. Juárez was no mere civilian such as Gómez Farías, nor a well-meaning ineffectual of the Herrera type, and behind him were a people who had learned not only to love liberty, but how to fight for it. The government forces were quickly augmented by thousands of citizen soldiers, hastening from field and mine and store, and one by one the *cuartelazos* were completely crushed.

Among the captured rebels was General Negrete, that man who had deserted in the dark hours of 1865, plotting treason in the United States for two years, and slipping back only when the French were gone. Because his name appeared on the bronze tablet commemorating the *Cinco de Mayo*, a great cry went up that his life should be spared, and prominent men flocked to the Palace with petitions. Facing the notable delegation that came to urge clemency, Juárez put his finger on the reason for Mexico's lack of political virtue. As he proceeded to point out, in words that had the bite of acid, treason flourished because it had come to be regarded as no more than a game played under recognized rules. Generals went from one side to another with such gay frequency because defeat

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and capture meant, not death, but merely the loss of a point. An end must be put to this criminal absurdity and equally must there be an end to the sentimentality that masqueraded as mercy. Negrete, he said, presented a perfect example of the military type that could not and would not grasp the necessity of civil government, and if released, would merely regard it as an approval of his violent course. "I spare him," concluded Juárez, "so that he may prove the truth of what I say, but bring no more such petitions. From this day on the penalty of treason is death."

The real leader of the various insurrectionary movements was Porfirio Diaz, in whose fierce nature were epitomized the ambitions and rapacities of the professional-soldier class. He had worked with such skill and cunning, however, that his guilt was not susceptible to legal proof, and lacking this, Juárez refused to believe that one so honored and trusted could be guilty of treason. Diaz had been his pupil in Oaxaca; it was by presidential appointment that he had risen from the ranks to highest command, and as a member of the government he knew its desperate straits and the need of demobilization. Fields were untilled, factories lay idle, and against an income of \$14,000,000 stood expenditures of \$20,000,000, chiefly for the army.

These considerations had no weight with Diaz. True, he had fought well and courageously against Zuloaga, Miramón and Maximilian, and had withstood the bribes of Bazaine, but his patriotism was not rooted in disinterested service, and years of soldiering had worked a certain brutalization that made the drudgeries of peace infinitely distasteful. All about him were men of the same stamp, patriotic enough when an invader menaced national liberties, but utterly unwilling to serve the country by an energetic return to civil pursuits. The suggestion that they put off their uniforms and go to work had all the force of an insult—the color of black ingratitude—and soon treason was being plotted by the very men who had risked their lives against the Empire.

His first adventures in rebellion failing badly, Diaz resigned from the army in May, 1868, and with much parade went to his farm of La Noria in his native State of Oaxaca. Here, leading the simple life of a farmer, to all appearances, he commenced to weave new webs

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of sedition, establishing intimate contact with every center of disaffection. A year later, in consequence, new insurrections began to develop, and true to the prediction of Juárez, General Negrete was their active spirit. He captained the garrison at Puebla in an uprising, but was soon routed, and in quick succession revolts in Guerrero, Zacatecas, and Tamaulipas were likewise brought to an end. In the early days of 1870, however, General Aguirre led the garrisons of San Luis Potosí into rebellion, and Generals Larrañaga and Pedro Martínez, sent against him by Juárez, went over to the rebels. Spurred on by this worthy example, General García de la Cadena, governor of Zacatecas, now took the field against the government, "pronouncing" in true Santa Anna style. General Sostenes Rocha, lifted to supreme command by Juárez, justified this faith, for he crushed the rebels with a force of citizen soldiers.

With the forces of disaffection defeated and scattered, Juárez turned once more to his many problems, exhibiting the same administrative ability that had made him Oaxaca's "model governor." Honesty and economy enabled the government to meet all expenses and to accumulate the necessary surplus for large constructive enterprises. An agrarian program, intelligently planned, restored the farmer to the soil; the press was nourished to vigorous growth, and free public schools were established throughout the length and breadth of the land. Agriculture was revived, mines were opened, factories built, and stimulation given to the arts, sciences, and every branch of industry. The crowning achievement, however, was a broad, comprehensive program of railroad and telegraph lines to be built, owned and operated by the state. This bold plan of government ownership of public utilities, following the Juárez fundamental that all natural resources belonged to the people, aroused new antagonisms, and the monied classes and the great landlords now joined the discontented "generals," even as in the days of Alamán.

At the presidential election in the fall of 1871, Juárez permitted his name to go before the people for the third time; Lerdo de Tejada was also a candidate; and Díaz again offered himself as the leader of the professional-soldier class. A general amnesty was declared in the interests of a free election, and when the votes were

## From Juárez to Diaz

counted, Juárez was found to be the choice of the people. Fronted with the prospect of four more years of rigorous reform, the forces of reaction decided upon another resort to arms. A meeting in the home of General Pedro Ogazón organized the rebellion, and Diaz was told plainly that the time had come for him to leave his safe cover and take chances with the rest in the open field. The treachery of "generals" could be counted on, as well as the support of soldiers unwilling to return to civil life, and there would be no lack of money, but authoritative leadership was a prime essential and they demanded that Diaz quit his sly cautions.<sup>1</sup>

On November 28, 1871, therefore, Diaz threw off his mask and declared against the government. The "Plan of La Noria" was modeled along the lines made famous by Santa Anna—the usual convention of "notables" to draw up a "scheme of government," and in the meanwhile Diaz to rule as "president." Felix Diaz, governor of Oaxaca, announced instantly in favor of his brother; Generals Trevino, Donato Guerro, and Naranjo revolted in the north, and General Negrete, leaping from concealment in the City of Mexico, was supported by the garrison in the seizure of the government arsenal. Moving swiftly, Juárez crushed Negrete, and dispatched troops to Oaxaca under command of General Rocha and General Ignacio Alatorre. Fearful of the battle that approached, Diaz issued an appeal to the armies of Rocha and Alatorre, calling himself "your sincere friend, your brother," and urging them to join him in saving "our beloved country from anarchy and corruption." In 1910 he was to kneel before the tomb of Juárez, sobbing tributes to "my great teacher, my worshiped master," but now he cried out against "Juárez who has dreamed he is a prince, Juárez, the coward, with his insensate despotism, Juárez with his mob of vile Cubans and cringing parasites." Adroitly enough, he painted the evil consequences of civilian rule for the professional soldier, and showered promises of glory and benefit in event of his own elevation to power.

General Alatorre answered with a counter-appeal that stripped Diaz to the bone, exposing him as a traitor without thought of the

<sup>1</sup> In one of his numerous biographies, Diaz admits this meeting, but explains it as a meeting of patriots. (*Diaz, Master of Mexico*, by James Creelman, p. 316.)

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country's good—another Santa Anna willing to crush the people back into old servitudes out of his own lust for power.<sup>2</sup> Facing certain defeat, Diaz fled to Vera Cruz, deserting his followers as he always did except when the odds were in his favor. In two decisive battles, Rocha and Alatorre whipped the rebels into disorderly flight, and the "Plan of Noria" faded from view.<sup>3</sup>

Felix Diaz, fleeing to the coast, was captured by Tehuantepec Indians and killed, and the "generals" either surrendered or took refuge in the hills. Porfirio himself, reaching Vera Cruz, managed to slip aboard a ship bound for Havana, and so made his way to the United States. Hearing, however, that Trevino, Naranjo, and Donato Guerro were winning victories in the north, he took ship from California to Manzanillo, and set out from there for Chihuahua, but government troops cut across his way and the ever-cautious rebel fled to the mountains of Tepic, seeking sanctuary with Lozano, the bandit. The charge that Diaz aided this master-murderer in his operations, acting as his chief of ordnance, is bitterly denied by the many paid biographers, but it is, after all, an unnecessary argument. There is no denial of the fact that while men fought and died in the open field as a result of his plotting, Diaz himself skulked in a robber's den, his associates the scum of the nation. General Rocha, cornering Trevino and Guerro in Zacatecas, administered a defeat which crushed the last hopes of the anti-Juárez forces. Guerro, however, rallied a force of rebels in Chihuahua, and Diaz, finally located in Lozano's stronghold, was sent an imperative message to the effect that he must return to the post of leadership or stand foresworn. Thus virtually scourged from hiding, Diaz journeyed to Chihuahua, but shortly after his arrival there came news of the death of Juárez.

Not all the hardships of battle and exile had had power to undermine that iron constitution, but the bitter years of the presidency—the gigantic labors of reconstruction and the heart-break of

<sup>2</sup> The two proclamations are printed in full in *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 5th Session, 42nd Congress.

<sup>3</sup> "The party calling itself Constitutional . . . lost its prestige, its moral force, with the rude attack made against the Constitution by the Plan de la Noria. The revolution was defeated by public opinion rather than the force of arms." Gustavo Baz, *Vida de Juárez*, p. 310.

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treachery, intrigue, and treason—wore him down and down until at last no strength was left to sustain his driving will. He died as silently and patiently as he had lived, uttering no word and drawing the sheet about his face even as the old Romans whom he so much resembled. Death came to him on July 18, 1872, at the age of sixty-six. The sense of national calamity which overwhelmed the nation—a conviction of irreparable loss—was in itself a tribute more lasting than bronze. Even calloused traitors, stunned into temporary realization of what Juárez had meant to Mexico, put aside their treasons, and it was amid a profound hush that Lerdo de Tejada, president of the Supreme Court, took the vacant seat and issued the call for a new election. Out of the hope that generosity and fairness might point the way to peace and unity, Lerdo guaranteed the freedom of the ballot and decreed amnesty to all rebels and political offenders. Diaz, from the fastnesses of Chihuahua, replied with a bombastic defiance, but as it failed to attract any attention whatsoever, returned to the City eventually and declared himself a candidate. For a full five years this man had cursed the country with his intrigue and uprisings, all the while claiming to represent the people, and yet when the votes were counted, it was found that less than one thousand had been cast for him.

Lerdo, elected overwhelmingly, was looked upon with considerable hope by the shattered Conservatives, for he was a "man of birth and breeding," not a "savage" such as Juárez. Whatever Lerdo may have been originally, years of association with the great Zapotecos had set his character, faiths, and beliefs in an identic mold, and he lost no time in making it apparent that the policies of Juárez were to be carried out with vigor and enthusiasm. The integrity of Congress was restored, wise agrarian laws were passed, the educational system was developed, and from border to border no trace of peonage was permitted to remain. Industry was fostered no less than agriculture, and on January 1, 1873, the railroad between Mexico City and Vera Cruz was opened. While the hierarchy raged, the separation of Church and State was emphasized by new laws, and the *Leyes de Reforma* made an integral part of the Constitution.

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Like Juárez, Lerdo believed whole-heartedly in the absolute necessity of a civil administration and the professional-soldier class was given no share in the government. Swiftly and resolutely the army was demobilized and the national defense entrusted to a newly created citizen militia, commanded by such generals as had shown sufficient social vision to grasp the necessity of the change. The effectiveness of this force was given convincing proof when Lozado suddenly launched a mighty attack against the government, sending three thousand men into Zacatecas, another three thousand into Sinaloa and marching against Guadalajara himself with eight thousand men. Not only did the citizen soldiers of Lerdo crush these expeditions, but Lozado himself was captured and executed.

For all his high faith and great ability, Lerdo was far from being a Juárez. His resolution was a thing of fits and starts, his judgment suffered queer lapses, and, like Gómez Farías, he had a certain intellectual impatience, a high-handed intolerance which alienated many whose vanity was more powerful than their patriotism. Juárez never confused sentimentality with mercy, but Lerdo had a fatal fondness for dramatic gestures. One of these was the restoration of Diaz to his full military rank, thus giving him authority as well as opportunity. Moving like a mole from city to city, Diaz preached the gospel of treason, and in December, 1875, accompanied by General Manuel González, crossed into Texas and made Brownsville his headquarters.

As has been noted, the Juárez policy with respect to public ownership of all utilities and natural resources, had given no little offense to those international financiers who were keenly appreciative of the vast profits in Mexico's exploitation. In the United States, industrialism was working to the concentration of wealth, and old ideals were giving way to new and menacing greeds. President Grant, anything but a "business man," was proving a puppet in the hands of unscrupulous financiers, and more and more the administration lent itself to the schemes and dreams of trade imperialism. Lerdo, as much as Juárez, stood opposed to concessions and privileges, and was already being denounced in New York and London as one who blocked "development." It may well have been the

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truth, as charged by certain Mexican historians,<sup>4</sup> that Diaz established contacts with the American money-power, promising a change in the Lerdo policy of "Mexico for the Mexicans," for he came suddenly into possession of large sums of money necessary for the purchase of arms, munitions, and supplies.

At a given signal, General Fidencio Hernández and Colonel Mariano Jiménez "pronounced" in Oaxaca, issuing the Plan of Tuxtepec, which called upon the people to banish Lerdo in favor of Diaz. At the same time, insurrections broke out in Puebla, Vera Cruz, Guerrero, Nuevo León, Jalisco, and Yucatan, the disbanded soldiery furnishing the physical force and the clergy contributing the usual anathemas against Lerdo as an enemy of God and religion. It was only after Generals Trevino and Naranjo had captured Matamoros, however, that the cautious Diaz deemed it safe to cross the Rio Grande. Even so, the people rallied under local officers, and at Icamole the "Savior of Mexico" was decisively whipped.

Of all the heroes of the war against Maximilian, only Escobedo remained loyal, and when this experienced soldier marched north at the head of a citizen force, Diaz did not wait to give battle. Abandoning his men, and leaving Guerra to be defeated and executed, he crossed the river into the United States and hurried to New York. Sailing for Mexico again, he was recognized at Tampico and only saved from arrest and execution by claiming the protection of the United States flag, and at Vera Cruz he escaped detection by the connivance of the ship's officials, making his way to Oaxaca, where he joined Jiménez and commenced the concentration of rebel forces.

Lerdo's term expired in October, but inasmuch as the rebellion of Diaz made martial law imperative, anything approaching a free election was manifestly impossible. The friends of civil government were a unit in demanding that Lerdo should remain in office until peace could be restored, and as the only alternative was to turn the country over to the military clique headed by Diaz, the President consented. Congress, voting in September, authorized the act by an overwhelming majority. Caught in the renascence of Santa Annaism,

<sup>4</sup> Dr. Luis Lara Pardo, *Porfirio Diaz a Francisco Madero*, p. 17; and De Lara and Pinchon, *The Mexican People*, p. 290.

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Jose Maria Iglesias, president of the Supreme Court, denied the validity of the act, advanced his own claims to the presidency, and hurried to Guanajuato, where the governor rebelled in his support.

It was to Diaz, however, that there rallied every discharged soldier and every "general" eager for the return of military rule, and it was against Diaz that Lerdo now threw his full force. On November 16th, at Tecoa in Tlaxcala, General Alatorre, still true, faced the rebels for a battle that both sides recognized as decisive. Although outnumbered, and with only citizen soldiers to pit against veterans, he was actually winning the day when the arrival of General González with strong reënforcements brought defeat. Puebla then surrendered to Diaz without a shot, the Church greeting him with *Te Deums*, and upon receiving the news, Lerdo resigned on November 20th and fled the country with only Escobedo and Romero Rubio to accompany him. He felt that his cause was hopeless, and was without the heart to prolong the bloodshed and devastation of civil war.<sup>5</sup> His flight killed resistance and Diaz and his army poured into the City like a locust swarm. Iglesias, as president of the Supreme Court, was now President, by virtue of Lerdo's resignation, but Diaz contemptuously kicked him into exile and seized the office. Firmly seated in the Palace, he called an election, and on January 28, 1877, after farcical balloting presided over by armed soldiers, was declared to be the President of Mexico by "unanimous choice of the sovereign people."

<sup>5</sup> "The Porfirista revolution was not really popular, and as I have said, Lerdo fell more on account of his own lack of faith and skepticism than because of any popular sympathy with the revolution." Zayas Enriquez, *Porfirio Diaz*, p. 195.

## 26: Diaz and Despotism

**W**ITH reference to the so-called "justice of history," few things are more illuminating than the general American treatment of Juárez and Diaz. Because Juárez stood against foreign exploitation of Mexico's natural resources, the opinion of the United States was skillfully prejudiced against him as an ignorant Indian, visionless and parochial, and even to-day his career is denied honest estimation. Diaz, on the other hand, turned Mexico over to foreign exploitation, and for thirty years the ears of the world were deluged with praise of his culture, rare ability, and economic vision. No other reason can be assigned, for the two lives were so closely paralleled that there was no chance for blunders in making the comparison.

Both were born in Oaxaca in bitter poverty, both went to the same schools, and both shared the perils of a common struggle from 1854 to 1867. As the records show, Juárez won to education and a high degree of culture, was repeatedly honored by the votes of the people, devoted his life to unselfish service, and left behind him shining ideals for the guidance and inspiration of his people. As for Diaz, he stumbled through his studies, failed to be admitted to the bar, and, to quote a distinguished historian, "inspired his contemporaries with a certain contempt by reason of his uncouthness and low intellectual calibre."<sup>1</sup> Twice beaten for the presidency in open, fair elections, it was by armed force that he finally gained the office, and when he went into exile in 1911, the curses of a people followed him.

No man ever had greater opportunity—no man ever turned away from it more blindly. A country was his to mold, but out of his lust for power he kept it shapeless, dooming the land to misery and ignorance that his tyranny might go undisturbed. After thirty years of autocracy, with a brimming Treasury always at his hand, eighty-five per cent. of his people could neither read nor write, an organ-

<sup>1</sup> *De Porfirio Diaz a Francisco Madero*, by Dr. Luis Jara Pardo, p. 7.

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ized system of peonage ground them deeper into misery and degradation, and not even in Russia itself was there such callous disregard of human rights. By every variety of fraud and force the ownership of the land was consolidated in a few hands, the natural resources were sold to the highest bidder for the enrichment of favored groups, and aspiration was crushed until men and women were as beasts of the field. He gave peace—yes—but it was the peace of the grave, for from the day he entered the Palace until he fled, a broken old man, Porfirio Diaz ruled by fear. From the first he made frank recognition of the army as the one source of power, and all civil necessities were set aside in favor of the military establishment. Special privileges and rich rewards won officers and soldiers to slavish devotion, and an offer of high pay formed bandits and guerrillas into a constabulary—*los rurales*—thus freeing the highways of brigandage even as it added to his armed force.

The apologists of Diaz—most vociferous in the days when the memory of secret favors was still acute—made much of the fact that the Dictator carried only a modest fortune with him at the time of his flight, evidently assuming that to clear him of the crime of avarice was to clear him of all crimes. It may be admitted that Diaz was not governed by money greed, and that he did not profit personally in the continuous pillage that marked his long administration, but these admissions are far removed from an acquittal. What ruled him was a passion for power that left no room for any other emotion. He did not steal, himself, but he allowed others to steal in return for their support. He gave his followers loot, which was what they wanted, and they gave him glory, which was what he wanted. Without appreciation of the nobilities, he possessed an almost uncanny appreciation of human weaknesses, and to a public life already corrupted, he added new corruptions until almost every man of force and note was bound to him by grimy ties. His other asset was a ruthless ferocity that took no account of the decencies. Those whom he could not buy soon met their death in mysterious fashion, always to his profound grief, however, for as Lerdo said of him in an outburst of aversion, “He weeps as he kills.”

Rutherford B. Hayes, Grant’s successor, refused to recognize the Diaz government, because of the bitter feeling created by Border

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difficulties, and it was not until 1878 that recognition was given.<sup>2</sup> Thus strengthened, and with the army and the *rurales* thoroughly organized, Diaz now resolved upon a lesson that would teach the country what protest would have to expect. In the summer of 1879 there was a mutiny of the crew of a gunboat stationed at an Alvarado River port, and on the theory that it was part of a wide-flung conspiracy, the nine leaders of a political club in Vera Cruz were arrested. Under telegraphic orders from Diaz himself, the men were dragged from their beds in the middle of the night, herded like cattle in a barracks-yard, and shot down as they begged for mercy. It was a lesson that did not have to be repeated, for as Diaz' biographer proudly chronicled, "The immediate effect of this Bacchanalian orgy of blood was to strike terror to the hearts of all conspirators. That the feeling was deep and lasting is proved by the fact that it is still felt to-day, thirty years afterward."<sup>3</sup>

Now secure in his place, Diaz proceeded to put the natural resources of the country upon a bargain-counter for purchase by the foreign *concessionaires* who came pouring into Mexico—a course which enabled him to fulfill his secret bargains even while it gave him the wealth necessary for the maintenance of the army. Casting aside the Juárez policy of government ownership, the development of transportation was turned over to American and English financiers, a first act being to grant concessions for two main lines, one from Laredo to Mexico City and the other from El Paso. The terms gave full notice as to the Diaz intent, for the builders were permitted to choose their own route, rights of way were donated, a fifty-year exemption from taxation was given, governmental supervision was waived, and huge construction subsidies allowed. Had Diaz adhered to the Juárez policy of public ownership of all natural resources, Mexico to-day would be the richest government in the world, able to function in all perfection without the imposition of taxes. Instead of that, oil lands, mines, timber and all wealth of the soil were turned over to foreign *concessionaires* with ten- and

<sup>2</sup> As a result of the prevailing disorder, murderous raids across the Rio Grande became so frequent that General Ord was directed to follow the marauders into Mexico "to overtake and punish." Diaz threatened war to the death, but thinking better of it, entered into coöperative relations with Ord.

<sup>3</sup> *Porfirio Diaz*, by Rafael Zayas Enriquez, p. 148.

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twenty-year exemptions from taxation. At no point was there any pretense of development, but throughout a callous emphasis on exploitation that drained the nation of its stored riches, only the friends of Diaz profiting.

At the end of four years, all devoted to the brutal consolidation of his power, Diaz faced the non-reëlection clause that he himself had inserted in the Constitution, and which, in fact, was the one decent excuse for his rebellions against Juárez and Lerdo. No doubt he would have swept it away without scruple, for popular protest was no longer possible, but certain considerations joined to compel a surface deference to existing law. Chief of these were various projected rapes of the Treasury and the public domain, for there were still scores of "generals" and politicians to be provided for, and saturnalia had to be furnished. Knowing the odium that must attach, Diaz resolved to put a tool in office for a term, one shameless enough for every grimy task and yet sufficiently stupid to be a puppet.

The man selected for this purpose was General Manual González, as ignorant and depraved a creature as had ever been developed by the military system. He had fought with Miramón against Juárez, and supported the French intervention during its first days, and had been the right hand of Diaz during his years of rebellion. González, squat, scarred and bearded, took office in 1880, and not even the reign of the worst viceroy nor the corruptions of Santa Anna constitute so shameful a page in Mexican history as the administration that followed. The commanders of the army and all civil favorites were invited to plunge their greedy hands into the national treasury; valuable concessions were scattered like confetti; laws were slipped through that wiped out ancient public rights, and the decencies of life were affronted by bacchanals even in the Palace itself.

One scandal was the sale of the Vera Cruz railroad to foreign capitalists, but the crowning shame was a debasement of the currency that gave new force to poverty and wretchedness. The government ring, obtaining control of the supply of nickel, forced one-, five-, and ten-cent pieces into circulation to the amount of \$20,000,000, and every employee of the government, outside of the

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army, was obliged to accept pay in this worthless metal. By way of greater loot, the nickel coins were issued at one value and received by Custom-houses at a rate forty per cent. higher, so that favorites of the administration could buy \$1,000 in nickel for \$600, and have it redeemed in Vera Cruz at par the same day. Mob violence eventually forced the measure's repeal, but only after it had worked its ruin. Another raid that failed was González' attempt to force recognition of the English debt at \$86,000,000, just \$30,000,000 in excess of the real figure. The difference was meant for local absorption, but bloody riots, only suppressed with the utmost difficulty, frightened González into capitulation.<sup>4</sup>

At the end of his term, the Custom-houses of Tampico and Matamoros were mortgaged up to ninety-nine per cent. of their receipts, and those of Vera Cruz, Laredo, Mier, and Camargo to eighty-eight per cent. What remained was drawn upon to pay the fraudulent claims of private creditors. The entire income of the general tax office of the Federal District applied on a thirty-million-dollar loan made by the National Bank, and of the receipts of the General Income Office, \$2,000 a day went to the National Bank for application to another loan, which also absorbed the profits of the National Lottery. The national mints were mortgaged for \$2,384,568, and there were mortgages on the National Palace, on Chapultepec Castle, on army barracks, on schools, hospitals, and almost every stick of national property. When it is considered that not one cent went to public improvement, the extent of the stealings of González and the government group may be imagined.<sup>5</sup>

To quote Dr. Pardo again: "Very few governments, even those of Turkey and Hindostan, and of the Spanish-American *caciques*, have ever offered a worse instance of prostitution and of administrative corruption. The ransacking of the public treasury was never more complete and bold; all the ordinary and extraordinary rev-

<sup>4</sup> Even José F. Godoy, most fawning of all the Diaz biographers, is compelled to admit that "the over-issue of nickel coins, the proposed settlement of the so-called English debt, the issuance of certain stamp taxes and other measures might have led to a public outbreak, or even to a revolution," had it not been for the return of Diaz to the presidency.

<sup>5</sup> Bancroft's *History of Mexico*, so eager and vicious in its attacks upon the United States, does not mention any of these facts, but actually praises González for his ability and honesty.

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venues went to swell the vaults of González and his favorites; new taxations were created . . . only the army was well paid, for otherwise they knew revolt would result. . . . That González carried on all these cynical plunderings in accord with the agreement made with Don Porfirio there is no doubt. He knew that he was to enjoy complete immunity, because General Diaz himself was the instigator of all these crimes.”<sup>6</sup> Every circumstance bears out the charge. Diaz held a post in the González Cabinet until popular rage reached too great a height, and on resuming the presidency in 1884, his first act was to throw a mantle of immunity over González and his stolen millions, crushing Congressional efforts at investigation and prosecution.

Diaz had not been idle during his retirement, working to his ends with a tenacity of purpose that set him apart and above the mercurial mixed breeds about him. The army occasioned him no bother, for González was glutting the “generals,” and it was to the aristocracy and Church that Diaz addressed himself. In 1882 he married Carmen Rubio, daughter of Don Romero Rubio, that wealthy patrician who had served in Lerdo’s Cabinet, and Archbishop Labastida, returned from exile, performed the ceremony. After a honeymoon in the United States, he offered himself as a candidate to succeed González, and the combination of forces in his support was such that no man dared to contest.

In rapid succession General Garcia de la Cadena, General Ramon Corona, and General Ignacio Martinez came to untimely ends, firmly establishing the general conviction that even a whisper against the government was an invitation to death. In 1886, therefore, Diaz reintroduced the English, Spanish and French claims for full recognition, inflating them in the process to \$147,274,000, plus arrears of interest which raised the amount to \$191,385,000. Of this vast sum it is distinctly questionable whether more than \$50,000,000 was legal indebtedness. There was the disgraceful Miramón-Jecker transaction, for instance; and of the English loans negotiated by Victoria in 1823-1824, only \$11,197,868 was received out of \$32,000,000 signed for.

With money pouring in from the sale of privileges; with huge

<sup>6</sup> *De Porfirio Diaz a Francisco Madero*, p. 38.

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exploitations of the natural resources, giving a surface effect of prosperity; and with a smooth-working system of espionage backed by the bayonets of a highly perfected military machine, Diaz now entered upon the unbroken reign that was not to end until his expulsion in 1911. In 1877 he had lifted his hand and taken solemn oath that he would never abandon the sacred principle of non-reëlection, but now his father-in-law, Romero Rubio, quietly engineered a law through Congress that wiped out this Constitutional provision. Even the four-year term proved a nuisance eventually, and in 1904 the tenure was changed to six years. Enlarging and perfecting the army as a machine for the suppression of popular revolt or even public remonstrance, closing up such papers as refused to be subsidized, killing and imprisoning in ruthless disregard of every form of law, the Dictator laid the foundations of as cruel and absolute an oligarchy as the world ever saw.

Congress was made over into an echo, and the governors of the states, virtually appointed, ruled as despots, accountable only to the Master Despot.<sup>7</sup> In Hidalgo, one critic was burned alive in a brick kiln, and in Nuevo León, General Bernardo Reyes personally shot down every one suspected of antagonism—temperamental outbursts which only caused Diaz to smile indulgently. The perfection of absolutism was reached with the installment in each community of a *jefe político* who served as a sort of pro-consul after the Roman fashion. These “political chiefs” collected tribute, supervised the farcical elections, distributed favors and penalties, and were in all things the source of local power, responsible only to Diaz himself.

In making a study of the times it is interesting to see how Diaz appropriated and modernized the “Alamán” idea. By every form of skillful propaganda it was burned into the minds of the people that the United States of North America was a rapacious neighbor, eager for intervention and conquest. The one safeguard was the continuance in power of Porfirio Diaz—the strong, the valiant—and, at the same time, a prudent generosity in the matter of giving foreign *concessionnaires* whatever they asked. This wall of hatred, suspicion

<sup>7</sup> “State sovereignty in Mexico is of necessity a fiction. . . . Such is his [Diaz’] influence that he has but to indicate the name of the candidate he approves, and the election becomes a formal ratification of his political judgment.” *Diaz: Master of Mexico*, by Creelman, p. 400.

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and distrust, shutting off friendly and understanding contact between the two peoples, gave perfect shelter for the despoliation program of Diaz and his international financial cliques.

The agency for this program of plunder was a group known as the Científicos. On resuming office in 1888, the President had crushed the various political parties, but by 1892 it was deemed expedient to make a gesture, and officials and administrative favorites announced an organization for the purpose of putting "science" into government. Never a political party in any honest sense, for there were no elections, the group soon surrendered whatever decent purpose they may have held originally, and degenerated into a close corporation for the promotion and division of "favors." Every necessity of life was turned over to monopolization, concessions for the exploitation of the nation's natural resources were auctioned to the highest foreign bidder, and public works were less for public benefit than for the enrichment of favored contractors and bankers.

Chief among these rapacities was a campaign of expropriation that robbed thousands of communities and individuals of their holdings, eventually creating a feudal system as compact and brutal as that devised by the Normans. In the last days of the González administration, there was passed a law for the survey of the public domain, by virtue of which the President had power to appoint surveyors to run new lines and make new maps. When this work was completed, an elaborate system for the verification of titles was announced. The majority of the natives, not being able to read or write, fell easy victims to the letter of the cunning law, and as a consequence, nearly every small holding was taken away from its rightful owner and sold for a song to the favorites of Diaz. The people resisted eviction with every force at their command, but the ruthless employment of government troops soon beat them into submission and out over the country poured thousands of wretched, homeless men, women, and children, either to starve or to become the serfs of great landlords.<sup>8</sup>

Not even communal lands were spared. Back in the days of the kings of Spain every Mexican community had been given a certain

<sup>8</sup> Edward I. Bell, in, *The Political Shame of Mexico*, deals frankly and fully with the personnel and methods of the Científicos.

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acreage for pasture and tilth, and here the people cut their fuel, pastured such few cattle as they possessed, and cultivated small patches of grain and vegetables. Even in the darkest days of the colonial régime, and during the subsequent clerical and military despotisms, the Church and the big landowners had respected the *ejidos*, or "shields," while the Constitution of 1857 had endorsed the original grants and enforced their maintenance. Diaz, however, seized the *ejidos* along with individual holdings, and the resistance of the people simply added to the list of massacres.

For years the Yaqui Indians had owned and tilled in the State of Sonora, tenacious of their ancient rights. When the greedy hand of Diaz reached out to seize their lands, the Yaqvis fought desperately, and in the bloody war which followed, federal troops not only killed and burned with a ruthlessness worthy of Cortes, but sent thousands of Yaqvis into slavery. Even a partisan biographer of Diaz could find no words for full concealment of this shame, and the following weak apology is in itself a bitter condemnation:

All attempts to conciliate the tribe had failed, thereupon the President had five thousand or six thousand Yaqvis taken by force to distant Yucatan, where labor was in great demand on the henequen plantations, and where they were distributed as laborers among such planters as would be likely to prevent any of them from returning to Sonora. This stern, but comparatively merciful policy, had practically settled the fearful Yaqui question, and to-day a thousand new forces of productive civilization are at work in Sonora. In Yucatan the deported Yaqvis are really prisoners of war. There is no pretense that they are free. They are not allowed to have arms, nor can they go back to their beloved native state in the Northwest.<sup>9</sup>

Another admirably illustrative chapter in the Diaz chronicle was the gutting of the Land Bank from which so much had been hoped. In response to a pressing public demand for government aid to the small landowner—for the Diaz expropriations had not entirely destroyed the class—there was created in 1908 the Caja de Prestamos para la Agricultura y Fomento de la Irrigation. The government stood behind the institution, putting in ten million pesos

<sup>9</sup> Creelman, p. 407.

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(silver) for the majority of the stock, and guaranteeing a New York loan of fifty million pesos (silver). Of this vast total, designed to better the lot of the humble, only a fraction was devoted to the pledged purpose. The larger part was given to Científico banks to cover gross embezzlements, and huge amounts went to Científico *industrial* enterprises, two million being loaned to the Monterey Iron and Steel Works alone. Of the total, 31,393,000 pesos fell into the hands of twelve persons or concerns, in average loans of close to two million. The end was a wreck that has not been salvaged to this day.<sup>10</sup>

Even the boasted achievements of Diaz, and they can be counted on one hand, suffer from the stain of corruption. The building of the railroad across the Isthmus of Tehuantepec, aside from its extravagant cost, was less in the public interest than in the interests of a Científico syndicate that controlled most of the land in the Isthmus. As for the great drainage canal which freed the Valley from the menace of floods, it was commenced by a Spanish viceroy and advanced by the engineers of Maximilian. Completion was as simple as it was necessary, but the task was confused and prolonged by every variety of extravagance, Diaz finally spending \$16,000,000. It was Maximilian also who laid out the noble sweep of the Paseo de la Reforma, restored Chapultepec, and initiated almost every municipal improvement for which Diaz received the credit.

The change from the silver to the gold standard, the abolition of inland Custom-houses, currency reform, and the rehabilitation of Mexico's credit were entirely the work of José Yves Limantour, Secretary of the Treasury. This able, brilliant son of a shrewd and unscrupulous father, came into the Cabinet in 1893, and with a passion for accomplishment, together with a genius for administration, gave the Diaz government stability in spite of its rotten foundations. It was Limantour, too, who put through the great government railway merger, although he had gained the idea from E. H. Harriman. The American magnate went to the City of Mexico with his plan in 1902, and Limantour, after absorbing its details, rejected the proposal and soon after advanced the scheme as his own. Diaz, never able to understand figures beyond simple sums,

<sup>10</sup> E. D. Trowbridge, *Mexico Today and Tomorrow*, p. 125.

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was first astounded and then suspicious, and only came to the merger's support when certain members of the Científicos worked out improvements on the Limantour proposition that permitted them to reap a rich profit.

But had all of these achievements been fair and fine and children of the President's brain—even when all the miles of railroad lines and telegraph wires are counted, exports and imports added up, the growth of industry duly admitted and a full Treasury applauded—what of it? The test of an administration, the one true criterion of a nation's prosperity, is the happiness of its people, and there can be no more terrible arraignment of Porfirio Diaz than a recital of the conditions which prevailed at the end of his thirty-four years of absolute power. In a country with a population of fifteen million, scarcely more than fifteen thousand owned every hectare of fertile soil, a feudal concentration without parallel in modern times.

In Morelos, for instance, a small group owned all of the arable acreage, and dispossessed farmers tilled the soil for them at an average wage of twelve and a half cents a day. In Lower California, seventy-eight per cent. of the lands belonged to large companies, four foreign concerns holding a total of 26,070,000 acres, an area larger than the State of Ohio. Between Saltillo and Zacatecas, one hundred and eighty miles, all the land belonged to three estates. The Mexican Northwestern Railway owned three million six hundred thousand acres, over three million being covered with pine, the largest single timber tract in the world. The railway traveled for many miles through the Escandón estate in Hidalgo. In Tamaulipas there was one holding of seven hundred and fifty thousand acres, half tillable land, but less than twenty thousand acres under cultivation. The Terrazas estate, mainly in Chihuahua, contained more than thirteen million acres of land, a stretch twice the size of Massachusetts.<sup>11</sup>

It was not only landlessness which contributed to the horror of poverty; every necessity had been handed over to monopolization and taxes fell entirely on the poor. According to a competent writer, ". . . the tax upon street sellers in public places, or small retail stores, produced more in one of the richest districts in the State of

<sup>11</sup> Trowbridge, p. 119.

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Guanajuato than the whole land tax of the district.”<sup>12</sup> The great bulk of the population, driven from the land, were forced to accept employment on the plantations or in the mines, with the result that free men soon sunk to slavery. No worker could leave his employment while he owed money to his employer, and the unscrupulousness of the overseers, together with the extortions of the stores maintained by each estate and mine, put every man in debt and kept him there. As time went on it came to be the case that one employer would sell his claims to another, so that the peons could be moved from district to district, from state to state.

Even when workers escaped peonage, Diaz had ways of teaching them their proper place, notably his famous settlement of the Orizaba strike in 1907.<sup>13</sup> Subversive ideas, flowing across the Border from the United States, impelled the factory workers in the Rio Blanco district to form a union for protest against wages and working conditions. Diaz sent two thousand federal soldiers into the district and in the massacre which followed, not even old men, women, or children were spared, such as escaped death being driven to the cold and hunger of the hills.

The law, such as it was, operated always against the native and in favor of the foreigner. When the judges themselves were not controlled by the Científicos or in the pay of *concessionaires*, Diaz himself would intervene, ordering the verdict that he deemed favorable. Thus the whole judicial system was rotted at its source, and confidence in the administration of justice—that keystone in democracy’s arch—was turned to hate and derision. Nowhere was there one inch of firm ground for the erection of a single standard to which the people could repair. The governors, virtually appointed for life by Diaz, owned and operated gambling-houses as one source of income; and although every one knew alcohol to be the curse of the Indian, the consumption of *pulque* was encouraged in order to add to the fortunes of the favorites who controlled maguey plantations.

From the dawn of time, education has been the need of the

<sup>12</sup> Fernandez Gonzalez Roa, *The Mexican People and Their Detractors*, goes fully into Diaz’ taxation.

<sup>13</sup> De Lara and Pinchon, p. 328.

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masses, and a system of free public-schools was the great dream of Benito Juárez. Diaz destroyed the beginning of this system by premeditated neglect, for never once in thirty-four years did the annual federal appropriation for schools exceed \$4,000,000. As a consequence, the census of 1910 disclosed that eighty-three per cent. of the people could neither read nor write. Sanitation was equally neglected, for in 1910 the mortality of Mexico City—with its healthful climate—was larger than that of any other large city in the world.

These conditions—this vast accumulation of misery which crushed the soul of a people—were due entirely to Porfirio Diaz, for his was the power to remedy every evil, yet while the nation fainted in its chains, authoritative world voices were raised to acclaim the Dictator as one who had blessed the land with peace and law and order. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States, wrote these words over his own signature: "President Diaz is the greatest statesman now living and he has done for his country what no other living man has done for any other country—which is the supreme test of the value of statesmanship." Bitter irony might have been suspected had the President not sent his Secretary of State, Elihu Root, to pay tribute to Diaz in person, and Mr. Root, viewing the works of the Dictator with his own eyes, waxed lyric in his enthusiasm.

"It has seemed to me," he sang, "that of all the men now living, General Porfirio Diaz was best worth seeing. Whether one considers the adventurous, daring, chivalric incidents of his early career; whether one considers the vast work of government which his wisdom and courage and commanding character accomplished; whether one considers his singularly attractive personality, no one lives to-day that I would rather see than Porfirio Diaz. If I were a poet, I would write poetic eulogies. If I were a Mexican, I should feel that the steadfast loyalty of a lifetime could not be too much in return for the blessings that he had brought to my country. As I am neither poet nor Mexican, but only an American who loves justice and liberty, and hopes to see their reign among mankind progress and strengthen and become perpetual, I look to Porfirio

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Diaz, the President of Mexico, as one of the great men to be held up for the hero worship of mankind.”<sup>14</sup>

In 1909, when there was plain evidence of unrest in Mexico—premonitory rumbles of the coming revolution—the great financial interests in control of the Taft administration were powerful enough to send the President to El Paso for an official exchange of visits with the Dictator, each crossing the Rio Grande in turn to clasp hands, break bread, and trade eulogies.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> October 1, 1907, Creelman, p. 419. Godoy, in his *Porfirio Diaz*, dilates upon this tribute, and that of President Roosevelt, and also prints the fulsome eulogies of Andrew Carnegie, Joseph G. Cannon, Alton B. Parker, and other eminent conservatives.

<sup>15</sup> See Chapter XXVII, p. 293.

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**A**s election followed election, each a farcical formality, there grew the hopeless conviction that time itself had lost all power to work change. Even the Dictator's death ceased to be counted upon, for as one wit phrased it, "Don Porfirio will simply pick up a pen and publish a decree authorizing him to live another twenty years." At first it was a Diaz habit to preface an election by the announcement that he desired to return to private life, but this was soon recognized as a cat-and-mouse trick to discover which of his subordinates, if any, nursed the unholy ambition to succeed him.

Jealous and distrustful, he eliminated honesty and ability from his Cabinet until at last only Limantour remained to furnish brains for the administration, and even in his case Diaz wavered continually between an angry wish to be rid of him and the fear that he could not do without him. In 1902, for instance, he confided to the public that he would not be a candidate for reëlection, feeling that the time had come when he could afford to indulge his cherished dream of a rustic life far from the madding crowd, and indicated Limantour as the proper person for his mantle to fall upon. At the same time, however, the papers were filled with slanderous attacks upon the Secretary of the Treasury, which attacks were, by accident, suddenly revealed as the work of General Bernardo Reyes, Secretary of War, and the man closest to Diaz at the time. Compelled to dismiss Reyes as a matter of decency, the President appointed him Governor of Nuevo León, a virtual confession that he had countenanced the attacks, and then calmly declared that his reëlection seemed to be the one cure for such unfortunate political dissensions.

On taking the presidency again in 1904, Diaz allowed himself another fling at Limantour by naming Corral as Vice-President, a newly created office. As Governor of Sonora, Corral had been the Dictator's agent in the dispossession of the Yaquis, and, promoted

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to be Governor of the Federal District, had added to his reputation as one thoroughly vicious and unscrupulous. The loathing in which he was held by the people made him a safe man to exalt, even as it satisfied the Dictator's jealous hatred of his Secretary of the Treasury, for Corral sat above Limantour at the Cabinet table and preceded him at public functions.

Again the years took up their march, and with monopolization, force, and corruption reduced to a science, and the people sunk in poverty, fear, and ignorance, the evil structure of autocracy had the look of permanence. It is the salvation of freedom, however, that tyranny carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction. Wise old Ignacio Mariscal, for thirty years Secretary of Foreign Relations, began to ail, and with Limantour in disfavor, the Dictator was left without a disinterested friend or a patriotic voice. Laughing at his vanity, even while they played upon it, every element of greed and venality clustered about him, looting as though they saw the end, even pillaging army funds until the military establishment was robbed of a sound foundation.

The first plain signs of disintegration came in March 1908, when Diaz announced that he would not be a candidate for reëlection. He moaned that his shoulders were bowed with the cares of state, and, as a result of his achievements, all carefully recited, he felt he had earned the right to the rest and quiet his soul had always loved. Instead of evoking an agony of protest, what was his anger and dismay to find that there was a disposition to take him seriously, and, humorously enough, Científicos were leaders in the movement. The men composing it had sufficient wisdom to see that Diaz, now seventy-eight years old, was failing rapidly, and there was the added fact that his inflammable vanity made him a troublesome and unsafe figurehead. Far better, they reasoned, to make the change at once instead of taking chances on his senility, and after much unhappy deliberation their choice fell on Limantour. He was not the man they wanted, being rich enough to afford the luxury of honesty, but he was a conservative and, even more to the point, the one able administrator of the group, as well as the sole Científico possessing public confidence in any degree.

Others than the Científicos, however, were alive to the possibili-

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ties contained in the Dictator's infirmity, chief among them being General Reyes. This bombastic soldier, blessed with a beard of nobler proportions than any since that of González, had improved his time as Governor of Nuevo León, and Coahuila, Tamaulipas, and some parts of Guanajuato were now committed to his cause. While the hirsute General merely announced himself as a candidate for Vice-President against the despised Corral, cautiously holding back his presidential announcement until the situation should develop more fully, no one was deceived as to his real intent. Moreover, the supporters of Reyes came boldly out in the open and formed a "Democratic" party in the Capital itself, the first independent political organization in thirty years.

It is doubtful, however, if even these obvious signs of disintegration would have stirred the people to hope had not a leader risen, one with enough of Galilean fire to pierce through crusted apathies to the very soul. Francisco I. Madero, even as Hidalgo, was an "intellectual," his powerful clan bound to the Diaz régime by every tie of financial interest, for old Evaristo Madero, his grandfather, was a great landlord, owning 1,728,000 acres of land, rich in rubber, vineyards, timber, cotton, oil, and minerals. Through some queer revolt of the spirit, however, the young Francisco had never shared in the material preoccupations of his family, from his earliest youth evincing a passionate idealism that made him somewhat of a scandal to his class. Not even college years in the United States cured him of his belief in democracy, and upon returning to Coahuila, his native State, he had risked imprisonment time and again by bold attacks on Diaz and the Científicos.

In 1908 he transferred his activities to the City of Mexico, and out of his scant funds, for his people had cut him off, rented a little house in the Calle Berlin and made his doorstep a pulpit. A meager little man, only five feet four, and with a squeaky voice, there was that about him which defied ridicule, for he preached justice and equality with the passionate sincerity of an ancient prophet. The whispered candidacy of Limantour and the open announcement of Reyes convinced Madero that the Diaz régime was crumbling at the base, and boldly forming a party of his own—the Anti-Reëlectionists—he also published a book under the title of

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*The Presidential Succession.* For the first time in three decades, printed words declared and proved the evil consequences of Diaz' rule, and the small volume circulated with all the force of a Declaration of Independence.

Faced with these evidences of disaffection, two plain courses were open to Diaz. The more obvious was the delivery of his mantle to Limantour, and the concentration of strength behind him as the one means of continuing oligarchic rule. The other was the elimination of the malodorous Corral from public life, the dismissal of certain notorious governors, and various Cabinet changes. Diaz refused both courses. Power had become his breath of life, and after thirty years of it, the "strong man" was the helpless victim of his vanities. In the crisis, something of his old force returned, and he moved with speed and precision. As a first step he announced that he would accept the presidency again in 1910, putting, as always, the popular desire above his "own humble preferences." Following this, he made it clear that Corral would continue as Vice-President and that there would be no change in the governorships of the states, gestures designed to show his contempt for the babble of the mob.

A presidential decree removed the Governor of Coahuila, a Reyes partisan, and federal troops, invading Nuevo León, sent Don Bernardo himself on a hurried flight into the mountains. After a few days of hiding and thought, Reyes decided that discretion was preferable to valor, and after formal renunciation of his candidacy, was graciously assigned to a vague European mission. The incipient Científico revolt was disposed of no less easily, for its leaders were vulpine rather than leonine, and the raised mane of the old Dictator sent them scurrying to cover. For another thing, Limantour himself was peculiarly the banker type, utterly without stomach for quarrels and blows. As the jealousy and suspicion of Diaz commenced to manifest itself in furious rages, there is plain indication that Limantour gave up hope of averting the downfall that his intelligence foresaw, and prepared to flee the sinking ship.

Only Madero refused to be cowed. In March, 1910, two brothers were shot down in Colima, murdered under their own roof for having incurred the anger of the governor, and when the mother vainly appealed to Diaz himself, a cry of indignation shook the country.

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Aided by this and similar atrocities on the part of *jefes políticos*, Madero drove forward, and by April the Anti-Reëlectionists were sufficiently numerous and bold to call a convention in the City of Mexico. They named Madero and Dr. Francisco Vásquez Gómez as candidates for President and Vice-President respectively, and declared a platform based on effective suffrage (free ballot), non-re-election, and the restoration of stolen land to the people. The answer of Diaz was the suppression of all opposition newspapers and wholesale arrests that filled the prisons, Madero being confined in the penitentiary at San Luis Potosí. Limantour, the one man who might have saved the situation for conservatism, folded his tent in July and left for Europe, with the ostensible purpose of refunding the national debt.

With every sign of political revolt removed and the streets swept clear of poverty's wreckage, the Dictator was now free to devote patriotic ardor to the celebration of the one hundredth anniversary of Mexico's independence. From September 1st to September 30th there was a blaze of glory that threw the background into still deeper shadow. Amid days brilliant with pageants, and music-filled nights, the ambassadors and envoys of every country in the world paid tribute to the patriotism and genius of Porfirio Diaz, Mexican hospitality going so far as to provide proper apparel for certain shabby ministers from Central America. Spain returned the uniform worn by Morelos, France gave back the keys of the City taken by Forey in 1863, Germany contributed a marble statue of Humboldt, and Turkey, Italy, and Japan sent rich gifts to lay at the feet of the great Giver of Concessions. Twenty carloads of champagne were required for the banquets, special rooms had to be built for orchestras, the ballroom of the Palace boasted thirty thousand electric stars, fireworks from Paris turned the darkness into day, magnificent tableaux portrayed the three great epochs of national life—the Golden Age of the Aztecs, the Conquest, and the Independence. Hidalgo was acclaimed as the Father of Liberty and Diaz himself placed a wreath on the tomb of Juárez, sobbing a tribute to "my beloved Teacher."<sup>1</sup>

On September 27th, as a fitting climax to the Babylonian revel,

<sup>1</sup> Creelman, p. 1.

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Diaz and Corral were declared the unanimous choice of the people for another six-year term, and all the state governors were likewise elected by the same process of acclamation. The Anti-Reëlectionists had the courage to appeal to Congress for the nullification of the election, but the petition, as a matter of course, was contemptuously rejected. Madero, meanwhile, had been released on bail, and in early October, after issuing the "Plan of San Luis Potosí," which called the people to arms, he fled across the Border into Texas. Making San Antonio his headquarters, he was joined by Abraham González, Venustiano Carranza, Aquiles Serdan and other disciples, and as a result of conference it was decided that word should be sent out for a general uprising on November 20th. Traitors revealed every detail of the plan, however, and on the 17th Diaz struck hard, making wholesale arrests in every city. Unready and dazed, no resistance was offered except in Puebla, where Serdan defied the police and flew the flag of the new freedom from his windows. With his wife, sister, mother, brother and fifteen recruits, he resisted the attack of a thousand government soldiers for a whole day, the women fighting side by side with the men, but in the end the little garrison was forced to surrender.

The bullet-riddled body of Serdan, dragged through the streets, was looked upon as the end of the revolution, but, even as the head of Hidalgo, it proved an inspiration. Throughout the land the voice of protest commenced to be heard, and in virtually every state bands of men armed themselves and took to the hills. In Chihuahua, particularly, where people groaned under the rule of the Terrazas clan, revolt had the speed and sweep of a prairie fire. Luis Terrazas, appointed governor in 1877, joined cunning to autocratic power, and by steady acquisition of land, mines, and industries, had reduced the state to the low level of a feudal fief, making himself the "richest man in the world." Abraham González, first to take the field in support of Madero, was followed by Pablo Orozco and José Blanco, mere farmhands, and the three quickly evidenced rare talent for the guerrilla warfare that they waged.

General Juan Navarro, sent to Chihuahua to crush the rebellion, shot civilians in the most approved Diaz manner, but the rebels slipped through his nets when they did not turn and defeat him.

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Seeing that armed force would not avail, the Dictator ordered Alberto Terrazas to surrender the governorship to a Liberal, but this gesture failed of effect, and by February, Orozco was strong enough to threaten Ciudad Juárez. Inadequately garrisoned, the capture of the city presented few difficulties, but the headstrong Blanco refused to join forces for the assault, and on the 5th Colonel Rabago rushed up with reënforcements from Casas Grande, defeating Orozco in a battle at Bauche. Seven days later Navarro puffed in after a forced march from Chihuahua, and the rebels withdrew.

Now was the time for Diaz to have ground out the last spark of rebellion, but causes other than physical degeneration had been at work to turn the hand of iron into putty. Instead of directing an army of forty thousand well-trained, adequately equipped soldiers, the Dictator soon found that more than half were "straw men," mere dummies carried upon the payroll for the benefit of grafting generals. Worst of all, the jealousies of Diaz had driven away every man of strength, and now in his hour of need he found himself surrounded by creatures whose sole competency was in theft.

Well for Francisco Madero that only the shell of power faced him, for aside from the dignity given by ideals, the revolution was farcical in its ragtag ensemble—scattered bands of half-armed, under-fed men without money to remedy their lacks. Despite a variety of lies persistently circulated, Madero had not received a dollar from any financial, industrial, or political interest, foreign or domestic, nor was such aid ever received. A mortgage on his home in Monterey supplied him with his entire capital when he went to the City of Mexico, and even if his family had desired to help him, a Diaz embargo in 1910 tied up every cent of their revenues. Old Evaristo took to his bed, never to rise, and Francisco, Senior, driven into the revolution, was simply another drain upon his son's feeble resources.

Gustavo Madero, bluff, blonde and ever a gambler, was the one and only financial backer of the desperate enterprise, and his money was derived from a thoroughly criminal transaction.<sup>2</sup> At an earlier

<sup>2</sup> Bell handles the financing of the Madero rebellion in great detail. (*Political Shame of Mexico*, pp. 89-95.) An American newspaper man, editor of *La Prensa* and *The Daily Mexican* throughout the rise and fall of Madero, he may be accepted as an authoritative and impartial voice.

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time he had interested French capital in a Zacatecas railroad concession, and \$375,000 had been forwarded to his company as first payment on the underwriting of the bonds. This trust fund Gustavo boldly deposited to his personal account and began using it for the purposes of the revolution. After helping Francisco escape from San Luis Potosí, he took his father, several brothers, and Dr. Vásquez Gómez with him to Washington and New York, where lobbyists, publicity, and the purchase of munitions soon exhausted his slender capital. As a matter of fact, only twelve hundred dollars remained when he fled from New York in March to escape arrest on complaint of the French capitalists.

While Gustavo was vainly attempting to raise additional funds in the east, Francisco was dodging the United States authorities for his charged violation of the neutrality laws. Hiding in San Antonio, then in New Orleans and later in El Paso, waiting and hoping for money and arms, pursuit became so hot that he was forced across the Rio Grande on February 11th, entering Mexico at the head of an army of fifteen men. Working indefatigably, however, he composed the differences between Orozco and Blanco, and even captured the loyalty of Francisco Villa, a local Robin Hood who had long been pillaging the northern states. Catching the inspiration, Luis Mora, a simple farmer, now took the field in Durango; in Guerrero, the brothers Figueroa incited to rebellion, aided by Marguerita Neri, a sturdy Joan of Arc; in Morelos, Emilio and Eufemio Zapata armed the workers and defied the great Governor Escandón; in Jalisco a barber by the name of Aragon rose to leadership, and the hero in Puebla was Rafael Tapia, a shoemaker. As if to confound the theory that leadership is an exact science, only learned in schools, these village Hampdens soon commenced to earn military reputations at the expense of the gold-laced graduates of Chapultepec.

In Chihuahua, Madero fought at the head of his men, and as wounds proved him willing to die for his faith side by side with humble souls, men flocked to his banner from every quarter, carrying anything that met their idea of a weapon. Garrison after garrison commenced to retreat without giving battle, and by March both Juárez and the city of Chihuahua were lying under the rebel

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menace. On March 7th, out of a clear sky, President Taft issued an order commanding the mobilization of twenty thousand men—two thirds of the regular army—on the banks of the Rio Grande. There was bland announcement that the purpose was to provide “field training for the officers and men,” but the press of the United States and Mexico filled at once with charges of intervention. Ample support was given to the theory by the fact that soldiers were rushed to the Border in express trains, while administration papers editorialized about the necessity of protecting American lives and property even if Mexico had to be invaded, and gravely declared that Europe looked to the United States to keep order and safeguard investments in Latin-America.

There can be small doubt that intervention was the purpose of the Taft mobilization, for in the seats of the mighty were men whose vast financial interests in Mexico made them keenly desirous of a government able to maintain order and endow property rights with the necessary sacrosanctity. Senator Nelson W. Aldrich, undisputed master of the Republican machine, owned huge rubber holdings in Durango in connection with the Rockefellers; the wide-flung engineering and construction company of S. Pearson and Son, Limited, whose head had been made Lord Cowdray in 1908, employed George W. Wickersham as its American counsel until his appointment as Attorney-General in the Taft cabinet; his firm still held the connection, and one of its members was Henry W. Taft, the President's brother; the Guggenheims, owning mines and smelters throughout Mexico, had been linked closely with the Taft administration through Richard A. Ballinger, Secretary of the Interior,<sup>3</sup> and Henry Lane Wilson, ambassador to Mexico, was known to enjoy Ballinger's favor.

These, and others like them, were not such simpletons as to fail to see the many obvious evidences of the disintegration of the Diaz régime, and were doubtless honest enough in their belief that anarchy impended. Either the Mexicans themselves must evolve another “strong man,” or the United States must cross the Border to put an end to the chaos. What they had overlooked, however,

<sup>3</sup> Ballinger's resignation was forced on March 6, 1911, by reason of the charge that he had used his office to favor Guggenheim interests in Alaska.

were certain definite changes in the American political situation. The Democrats, aided by insurgent Republicans, were now in control of the House, and a Progressive bloc in the Senate took advantage of every opportunity to assail the reactionary tendencies of the administration. The mobilization order was followed by an overwhelming burst of popular indignation, and as a consequence, President Taft found himself in the position of that aimlessly active King of France who marched up the hill and down again.

The net result of the attempted *coup* was to strengthen Madero and weaken Diaz, for the Mexican people leaped at once to the conviction that intervention was the Dictator's own secret plan. Some comprehension of the completeness of the collapse must have dawned upon his failing mind, for the course of Diaz now became a curious compound of rage and fear. On March 16th, for instance, he suspended personal rights and declared martial law, but in the same breath removed Mucio Martínez, the infamous governor of Puebla. It was at this juncture that Limantour returned, called from Paris by frantic cablegrams. Acting on the Finance Minister's advice, Diaz discharged his entire Cabinet on the 24th, Limantour and González Cosío, Minister of War, being the only ones to receive reappointment; and Francisco de la Barra, Ambassador to the United States, was brought back from Washington to take the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. This amazing concession to the popular will was followed on April 1st by a proclamation in which Diaz declared for the principal of "No Reëlection," and announced arrangements for returning the land to the people.

The exact motives and purposes of Limantour were not understood at the time, and even to-day remain subject to a large amount of inference and deduction. It is known, by his own admission, that he met Francisco Madero, Senior, and Gustavo in New York on March 14th, listened attentively to their plans, and agreed with them that Diaz and Corral must go. Moreover, he imposed the name of Francisco de la Barra upon the conference as his candidate for Provisional President, carefully avoiding any commitments as to the future. It is known also that upon his return to Mexico, and immediately following the reorganization of the Cabinet, he sent a coded telegram to Gustavo Madero in San Antonio saying, "Gov-

ernment reforms continue developing in sincere accordance with the understanding.”<sup>4</sup>

What may be argued intelligently is that Limantour, even before leaving Mexico, had become convinced that the Diaz oligarchy was tottering to its fall. Nor was his quick, subtle mind at a loss to understand the attitude of the United States, plainly recognizing Mexico’s alternative as the maintenance of conservative government or American intervention. He himself was barred from the succession by reason of various offenses given to American interests in the past, and doubtless the first word he received in New York was to the effect that Washington favored de la Barra. Limantour’s nature left him no option in the matter. It was not only that he was patriot enough to hate the idea of intervention, but with all his aristocratic soul he loathed the radicalism and disorder of the Madero uprising. So, then, we see him sitting in friendly converse with the Maderos, approving the principles of the revolution, promising his aid in the obtaining of reforms, and only stipulating that de la Barra must be installed as provisional president pending an election. What more simple? With Diaz gone, the people placated by concessions, and the power of the United States and England behind the new government, it would be strange indeed if the rule could not be continued indefinitely.

While Limantour undermined the Diaz government by concessions which were confessions of weakness, Madero drove ahead in the field. Virtual master of Chihuahua, and with Luis Mora dominating Durango and Zacatecas, his forces were strong enough to invade Sonora in April, capturing Agua Prieta on the 13th. It was a victory that carried danger to the cause, however, for errant bullets killed several citizens of Douglas, Arizona, reviving the clamor for intervention. Nor did circumstances allow Madero any escape from his delicate position. The taking of Juárez was essential to the success of the revolution, and this city, like Agua Prieta, was on the American line directly across from El Paso. His needs overriding his fears, he gathered the troops of Orozco, Blanco, and Villa, and by

<sup>4</sup> Madero, Senior, gave an interview in San Antonio on March 29, 1911, distributed by the Associated Press, in which he recited the full agreement with Limantour.

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April 21st the investment of Juárez was complete. At the same time the Figueroas and the Zapatas were actually menacing the City of Mexico, having completed the conquest of Guerrero and Morelos. Congress, sensing the end, turned upon the Dictator with the fury of wolves, and Vera Cruz filled with Científicos lugging their plunder to places of safety, following the intelligent example of Corral who fled the country on the 10th.

Stunned, helpless, Diaz had no objections to offer when Limantour suggested an armistice. The proposal also jibed with Madero's own wishes, for he had little relish for an attack that might well end in a break with the United States. Various unofficial representatives failing to reach an agreement, Limantour sent a special commissioner on the 27th, one Francisco S. Carbajal, clothed with full authority. All discussions were based upon the resignations of Diaz and Corral, the only differences being the time and method, when Carbajal suddenly announced on May 6th that it was no longer possible for him to continue negotiations that had the elimination of the President as a base. The next day Diaz himself issued a statement that "the government means to redouble its efforts to crush the rebellion and will surrender power only when its conscience indicates that it can retire without handing the country over to anarchy."

As in the case of Maximilian, a woman had intervened. Señora Diaz, furious with humiliation at the sight of her husband being dealt with as though he were an aged cart-horse, called upon him to make a braver end. For a few days the Dictator talked gallantly enough of perishing in the ruins of the temple, dying with his face to the foe, and such similar melodramatic claptrap as his memory retained, but of all those who had fattened on his bounty not one leaped to his side, and even as the City rang to cries of "Death to Diaz!" news of disaster came from the north. On the 8th, several hundreds of Madero's command took the situation in their own hands, and after savage fighting gained a foothold in the suburbs of Juárez.

Forced into assent by a midnight counsel of his generals, Madero ordered a general assault at dawn on the 9th. All through the day and night the bloody struggle continued, the rebels dynamiting

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their way from house to house, and in the forenoon of the 10th, Navarro flew the white flag and surrendered his sword to General Guiseppe Garibaldi of the Foreign Legion. At noon Madero entered the City, and after paroling Navarro and twenty-seven officers, publicly assumed the title of Provisional President, and announced the following Cabinet: Foreign Affairs, Dr. Francisco Vázquez Gómez; Treasury, Ernesto Madero; War, Venustiano Carranza; Gobernacion, Federico González Garza; Justice, José M. Pino Suárez; Communications, Manuel Bonilla.

It was in this great hour that Madero was made to realize the persistence of the brutalities and mean ambitions that had never failed to curse the nation in every time of hope. Orozco, angered by failure to receive a Cabinet appointment, and Villa, jealous of the honors shown Garibaldi, and eager to murder Navarro and his officers, joined in open insubordination. Clapping revolvers against Madero's breast, they threatened his life unless he dismissed the Cabinet and turned over the prisoners. The Foreign Legion, hurrying to the scene, gave notice that the first shot meant wholesale bloodshed, but it was the little leader's own calm front which forced the two ruffians into snarling retreat.

The fall of Juárez marked the end of the Diaz régime. Torreon, Mazatlán, and other important points capitulated in quick succession, and as pellmell desertions carried almost every federal garrison into the ranks of the rebels, the despairing Dictator offered no further objections when Limantour urged the resumption of parleys. On the 21st an agreement was reached that Diaz and Corral would resign before the end of the month, Francisco De la Barra assuming the office of Provisional President until an election could be held. Every leader protested against the bargain as an interruption of the revolution, but when his father explained the New York agreement, and insisted that he was bound by honor, Madero felt that no other course was left to him. Limantour also fought hard to reserve the right to name the Minister of War, for it was part of his plan to put General Reyes in the post, but here Madero stood firm, insisting that Reyes be ordered to remain in Havana.

The last act of the Diaz drama was strictly in keeping with the traditions of a country where tragedy is never permitted to wear a

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crown. The morning papers of the 24th announced that the resignations would be presented to Congress in the afternoon, but dusk came without any message from the guarded house in Cadena Street. As if to deny him even the solace of dignity, the old Dictator had developed an ulcerated tooth several days before, and between age and opiates was now a doddering, pitiful old man. For a time he sat staring at the paper that meant the end of his power—perhaps some such procession of accusing figures marched before him as terrified Hunchback Richard in his tent—and even as he stared the sleep of exhaustion came upon him, pulling the pen from his trembling fingers.

His wife refused to have him wakened, and while he slept the City was drenched in blood. All through the afternoon impatient mobs had been clamoring for the resignations, and by ten o'clock that night, a throng of furious citizens jammed the plaza in front of the Palace, crying out in rage against what the people believed to be a Diaz trick for the retention of power. Time after time the police tried to disperse the throng, and when hand-to-hand fighting began, machine guns opened from the cathedral towers and the Palace roof. In the very heat of the massacre—two hundred were killed and hundreds wounded—the skies opened and a cloud-burst succeeded where the police had failed.

On the morning of the 25th, his hand guided by his wife, Porfirio Diaz put signature to the waiting paper; an impatient Congress accepted it at once, together with the resignation of Corral, and all through the day the shouts of a joy-mad people beat upon the windows of the Diaz home with the force of a storm. At four o'clock the next morning, the ex-Dictator and his family slipped out of the city to a waiting train, and under the armed escort of General Victoriano Huerta, fled to Vera Cruz in the footsteps of Iturbide, Santa Anna, Bustamante, Paredes, and all those others who had put ambition above country.

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MADERO's journey from the Border to the City was through a living lane. Down from the mountains, across miles of burning plain, men, women, and children poured in a steady stream, clustering at way-stations and water-tanks that they might see and hear this Messiah who promised an end to the miseries of bondage. Four days were taken to cover the seven hundred miles from Torreon, so great was the press of these pathetically adoring souls, and his reception in the Capital on June 7th completed the proof of a popular devotion such as had not been aroused by any man since Hidalgo. Limantour was stunned by this evidence of Madero's hold upon the common mind. The scenes attendant upon the Dictator's resignations, the reports from every State, made him realize the depth and extent of the revolution, and a week or two later he slipped away to Vera Cruz in company with rich Governor Escandon and others, and sailed for France. All hope of keeping Madero out of office was now centered on de la Barra, sitting in the Palace as Provisional President. An election had been called for October 2d, but with four months for obstructive plots, there was cynical confidence that the "little lunatic" would never come to rule.

Even had the over-turn been less than cataclysmic, changing the whole temper of the people, de la Barra was far removed from being an ideal counter-revolutionist. A marshmallow made up to look like a man, he was at all times more concerned with his personal appearance, the cadences of his bows and smiles, than with the grim business of combating the popular will. True, he delayed, evaded, and complicated matters, confusing the Madero councils in every possible manner, but what the situation demanded was a brutal resolution that did not stop at blood. As a consequence, the election came to pass, and despite the efforts that had been made to alienate the people, Madero received fully ninety per cent. of the one hundred and fifty thousand votes cast at the first free, open

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balloting in forty years. Even so, the traitors were not stripped of confidence, for in Mexico an election does not always mean inauguration. A Catholic Party, coming to sudden life, aligned itself with the Diaz hold-overs in Congress, and each day heard the Chamber resound to new and viler attacks upon the President-elect.

Some one of sterner stuff than de la Barra now took charge, and a plot was laid that carried every appearance of success. Madero had arranged a meeting with Zapata in the town of Cuautla, hoping to win the wild Morelian to coöperation and understanding, and there was solemn pledge that a truce should obtain throughout the conference. Even as the men sat face to face, General Huerta and a federal force attacked the Zapatista camp, driving them over the mountains, and then laid a trap for Zapata as he returned from Cuautla. It was presumed, of course, that the guerrilla, in his rage, would kill the unarmed, unescorted Madero, but he saw through the scheme, and after pledging friendship, fled by secret ways to safety.

This, together with the discovery of several similar plots, finally induced Madero to heed the warnings of his friends, and on November 6th, two weeks in advance of the formal inauguration, he took oath as President of Mexico, at once assuming the power that was being so unscrupulously used against him. That very afternoon he sent de la Barra to Italy on a diplomatic errand, and announced these Cabinet appointments: Rafael Hernandez, Minister of Gobernacion; Manuel Calero, Minister of Foreign Affairs; Ernesto Madero, Minister of the Treasury; Francisco Vásquez Gómez, Minister of Public Instruction; and González Salas, Minister of War.

There will always be dispute as to the real purpose and true capacities of Francisco Madero. The reactionaries, hating him for his disturbance of order, paint him as a fanatic who preyed upon the ignorances of a people for ends that he himself did not clearly understand. The radicals, in love with "isms" rather than ideals, have written him down as a well-meaning enthusiast without knowledge of fundamentals, actuated throughout by a naïve belief that the cure for Mexico's evils was merely a change in personnel and not in system. Neither judgment is honest or just. The whole life of the man—the sublimity of his faith and the perfection of his

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courage—compels the conviction that he saw down to the root of every wrong, and that what he had in mind was a complete rebuilding that should rear free institutions upon foundations of granite. It was his tragedy, and the tragedy of Mexico, that he was given neither time nor opportunity to plan or execute, for from the first he was beset, bedeviled, and obstructed by the open enmity of foreign nations and every conceivable domestic treachery. Moreover, public support, his sole reliance, was soon weakened by a variety of angers and suspicions.

It is one of the strange, sad facts of history that a people will endure oppression to an ultimate of patience, while liberty is always a signal for the release of every impatience. For forty years Mexico had not known the meaning of freedom, suffering every imaginable abuse of individual rights through the brutal greeds of the Diaz régime, yet in the first hours of Madero's administration there was a demand for the instant redress of every wrong, the immediate correction of every evil. Nothing was more obvious than that the land problem called for careful study, but Emilio Zapata straight-way pressed for a hair-trigger solution. When Madero wisely refused to be forced into precipitate action, the Zapatistas declared war against the government, Emilio setting himself up to make arbitrary distribution of all the land in the State of Morelos. In the north, Orozco sulked, making extortionate demands for money, and Villa teetered on the edge of desertion.

Added to this was a Congressional appropriation of \$350,000 made on June 11th in favor of Gustavo Madero. Instead of an honest explanation that this was to repay the money stolen from French investors, no word was said, a stupid silence permitting free circulation of the charge that it was merely a "treasury grab." Similar stupidity marked Madero's cabinet selections. Rafael Hernandez, his cousin, Ernesto Madero, his uncle, and González Salas, another cousin, had never had any connection with the revolutionary movement, and there was simple ground for the suspicion that their sympathies were all Científico.

The appointment of Manuel Calero as Secretary of State was a definite offense, for not only had he been Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies in the days of its most abject servility to Diaz, but

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he was the principal attorney for Edward L. Doheny, most prominent of the American oil group. Another mistake of Madero's was his choice of Pino Suárez as Vice-President, for this obscure editor from Yucatan was equally without competence and without following. It must be taken into consideration, of course, that the very suddenness of the revolution's success prevented the development of the administrative type. Military genius was developed in a hundred cases, but not trained executives. When it came to positions calling for expert knowledge and specialized abilities, the President felt that he must look to the Diaz group, trusting that love of country would secure the necessary loyalty.

The domestic situation, harassing enough in itself, was complicated by the state of Mexico's foreign relations. Europe made no secret of the hope that some "strong man" would soon assume control, and the Washington government, defeated in its plan to retain de la Barra, nursed a sullen anger. One of Madero's first tasks was to curtail the privileges enjoyed by the Aldriches, Rockefellers, Dohenys, Guggenheims, and Cowdrays, and as he addressed himself to this work, the resentment of the Taft administration changed into active enmity. The agent for the expression of this antagonism was the ambassador, Henry Lane Wilson, and he entered upon his duty with the relish born of a mischief-making mind and nourished by his choice of associates.

Upon arriving in Mexico in 1910, a Ballinger appointee, he had lost no time in identifying himself with the American colony branch of the Científico group, some of the principal members being Paul Hudson, editor of the Mexican *Herald*, a paper operated under annual subsidy from Diaz; Harold Walker, representing the Doheny oil interests; George W. Cook, a contractor in government supplies; Burton W. Wilson, an attorney later representing Standard Oil; E. N. Brown, president of the so-called National Railways, who carried the banner of the Speyer banking house; and L. R. Wilfley, a claims lawyer who specialized in getting the American Embassy to act as his collection agent. By virtue of a personal letter from President Taft, Wilfley had enjoyed close relations with Ambassador Thompson and when that bustling person's business activities led to resignation, he attached himself to Wilson on the same Si-

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amese-twins basis. This group, quickly known as "The Society of the Friends of the Ambassador," was frankly recognized as the one approach to the representative of the United States, and through it the old Científicos and other Madero haters established intimate relations with the American Embassy.

It was within the small confines of this wolf-ring that Madero set about a task which would have taxed the energies of an administrative genius surrounded by efficient aids and backed by the enthusiastic loyalty of a united people. At the outset General Reyes attempted a "pronouncement" that fell flat, winning him nothing but a prison cell, but Emilio Vásquez Gómez was more patient, and waited until the enemies of Madero were better prepared to give support. Furious over his failure to be named as Vice-President, he had gone to San Antonio, and when his brother, Dr. Francisco Vásquez Gómez, was kicked out of the Cabinet for his ugly insubordinations, Emilio crossed into Chihuahua and raised the red flag. Possessed of funds as inexhaustible as they were mysterious, he gathered about him a motley crew of bandits and commenced plundering the countryside.

Even as Madero took steps to crush the uprising, there came the announcement of another of Taft's amazing mobilizations. On February 4, 1912, the Secretary of War issued an order for the concentration of thirty-four thousand troops at the Mexican Border, and in addition the states were asked to be ready to furnish sixty-six thousand volunteers. The mobilization was a blow which struck at the very heart of Madero's government, for not only did it give encouragement to rebellion but it revived the old fears of the people. For forty years Diaz had cowed them with the threat of American intervention, and now, as Taft's army assembled on the banks of the Rio Grande, a panic began to spread. As a consequence, the Vasquistas occupied Juárez on February 27th without resistance, for with American soldiers massed on the other side of the narrow river, Madero did not dare give battle.

On the very next day Pascual Orozco threw off his mask and rebelled against the government, his ostensible reason being that the President had only paid him \$25,000 instead of the \$50,000 promised for his "patriotic labors." The real reason for his treachery

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was that the Terrazas family had succeeded in seducing what passed for his honor, for these masters of Chihuahua under Diaz were open in preferring American intervention to Madero's rule. As Orozco carried his army of six thousand with him into treason, together with arms, munitions, and supplies, the great northern state was lost to the government. To give Madero no chance to recover from the shock, Secretary of State Knox sent the following cablegram to Ambassador Wilson under date of March 2d:

Referring to all recent telegraphic correspondence you are instructed in your discretion to inform Americans that the Embassy deems it its duty to advise them to withdraw from any particular localities where conditions or prospects of lawlessness so threaten personal safety as to make withdrawal the part of prudence, specifying localities, if any, from which withdrawal at any time seems advisable, and stating that in any such cases consuls may take such charge of abandoned effects as may be possible under the circumstances.<sup>1</sup>

No other government took any such step, for the very good reason that it was totally unnecessary. Aside from the Zapata insurrection in Morelos, and the Orozco and Vásquez Gómez uprisings in Chihuahua, the country was at peace. The Washington order did its work, however, for there was enough of an American exodus to create confusion close to chaos. Then, on March 24th, there came the crushing news that Orozco had defeated the federal army in a decisive battle at Rellano, a point on the railroad between Torreón and Jimínez. General Trucy Aubert and General Aureliano Blanquet, commanding the wings, failed to provide adequate support when Orozco struck the center, and the Minister of War, González Salas, not soldier enough to meet the situation, fled the field and weakly committed suicide.

With his back against the wall, Madero now began to show the invincible spirit that had carried him through the trying days of the revolution. It will be remembered that a certain General Victoriano Huerta commanded the armed escort that guarded Diaz on his way to Vera Cruz. This man, the son of Epitacio Huerta, an Indian

<sup>1</sup> The placid acceptance of this withdrawal order by the press of the United States was in marked contrast to the hysterical clamor of 1914 when President Wilson asked American citizens to quit actual war zones.

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Hannibal who had fought nobly for Juárez, entered the army in 1872, and during those years when Diaz was killing, evicting, and terrorizing, won considerable reputation by the thoroughness of his cruelty. The Napoleonic tradition obsessed him, and there were years of work and pride, but after 1902 he shared in the general demoralization of the army and came to be regarded as a dissolute drunkard whose time of usefulness had passed.

Huerta was among the first of the Old Guard to be shelved by Madero, and doubtless no one was more surprised than the President when he begged the chance to proceed against Orozco. "I will whip him," he said. "I guarantee it." Taking the chance, for no other fit commander was available, Madero moved energetically to provide money, men, and munitions, and it was with a return of his old spirit that Huerta set out for Torreon at the head of an army. This done, the President now proceeded to break up the combine of intrigue headed by Manuel Calero and Ambassador Wilson, sending Calero to Washington, and appointing in his place Pedro Lascurain, an honest if colorless hanger-on of the old Científico hierarchy.

In the meantime, the Taft intervention program had met with strong opposition from the Democrats and Progressive Republicans in Congress, and the country supported these indignant protests. That most pitiable of all spectacles—a man without courage to resist evil counsel and equally without courage to carry it out—Mr. Taft weakened even as he had weakened in 1911, and again the Rio Grande witnessed the absurd sight of an American army engaged in the earnest occupation of thumb-twiddling. Thus balked, the interventionist leaders turned to the State Department, and on April 15th a note was sent to Madero, containing this paragraph:

The enormous destruction, constantly increasing, of American properties in the course of the present unfortunate disturbances; the taking of American life contrary to the principle governing such matters among all civilized nations; the increasing danger to which all American citizens in Mexico are subjected and the seemingly indefinite continuance of this unfortunate situation, compel the Government of the United States to give notice that it expects and must demand that American life and property within the Republic of Mexico be

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justly and adequately protected, and that this Government must hold Mexico and the Mexican people responsible for all wanton and illegal acts sacrificing or endangering human life or damaging American property interests there situated.<sup>2</sup>

Lascurain disposed of this note by an able reply, and the burden of ugly intrigue was now taken up by Senator Lodge, who declared in May that Mexico had turned Magdalena Bay over to Japan. No such transfer had taken place, nor had it even been contemplated, but the bold lie served its purpose in further embittering the relations of the two Republics. President Madero kept his head and temper, the crisis passed, and from the north came news of victory. From the first, Huerta proved Orozco's master, for the *insurrecto* was a coward at heart, and never at any time led his men in person. Leaving Torreon on May 8th for his drive against the enemy, Huerta won skirmish after skirmish, and on the 20th forced a major engagement at Rellano, scene of the González Salas disaster. After a three days' battle covering six miles, the bandit army was whipped into headlong flight, abandoning arms, munitions, and supplies in its dash for safety. Tearing up every inch of the railroad as he retreated, Orozco now took refuge in Chihuahua, but placed his army at Bachimba, forty miles to the south, choosing that town as his next stand. Two thousand of his best soldiers had been killed in the fighting, but as Huerta had one hundred and forty-two miles of railroad to build between Rellano and Bachimba, Orozco confidently figured that he would have several months in which to recruit.

Drunkard that Huerta was, assassin and traitor that he was to become, it must be admitted that his whole campaign against the rebels showed a brilliant, sustained resourcefulness not unworthy of the Napoleonic tradition to which he gave his worship. In less than fourteen days he had beaten back superior forces a full eighty miles, crowning victorious skirmishes by complete success in the major engagement. Now, facing seemingly insuperable obstacles, he drove forward with the same fierce energy, rebuilding the railroad, gar-

<sup>2</sup> This note, together with all others hereinafter quoted, are on file in the State Department, and are also to be found in the newspapers of the date.

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risoning towns, protecting his rear, and on July 1st came before Bachimba for the final grapple. His army consisted of sixty-five hundred men as against eighty-five hundred fully equipped with arms sent in from El Paso, but on July 3d the Napoleonic old Indian tore his enemy into bleeding fragments. The cautious Orozco fled to the United States at once, and after occupying Chihuahua, Huerta swept the State free of *insurrectos*, entering Juárez on August 20th.

These things done, the characterless Indian returned to his vomit. Carousing in the north, giving himself over to every low dissipation, he finally reported to Madero with a shortage of 1,500,000 pesos in his accounts. Refusing to give any explanation—"I am no bookkeeper," he shrugged—the President appointed him a major-general and then quietly retired him to the waiting-list.

The effect of Huerta's victories was instant and helpful. Congress abated its vicious abuse, and the press, equally cowed, halted the campaign of slander and treason. De la Barra, returned from Europe, found conditions vastly different from what he had been led to expect, and subsided without a murmur. Such was the return of confidence, in fact, that the government succeeded in placing a loan with Speyer & Company for ten millions, in one-year,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  per cent. notes at a discount of about 95. It was not enough, to be sure—fifty millions had been hoped for—and the short-term notes were regarded as humiliating to Mexican credit, but any loan at the time was a victory, and with the money Madero was able to revive industry and agriculture in some degree, and plan his land program.

Only Henry Lane Wilson, Ambassador of the United States to Mexico, continued to stand out in bold and hopeful opposition. Even as Madero struggled to strengthen his footing, Wilson began to hound him for the settlement of certain claims, all the while propagandizing the United States to the effect that Madero was scandalously refusing to give justice to American interests. On September 8th, therefore, the correspondents at Beverly, Massachusetts, the summer home of the President, were given an interview on Mexican affairs in which this paragraph appeared: "Mr. Taft is opposed to intervention, except as the last resort. It is admitted, however, that conditions in Mexico have become much worse in the

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last few weeks, and if the Madero government is unable to check the attacks on American citizens, the United States will be constrained to take some action." Again on September 15th, Ambassador Wilson, under authority from Secretary of State Knox, was actually permitted to prepare and present a bill of complaints to the Mexican Government, couched in the ugly tone of an ultimatum.

What, then, were the unbearable offenses against American citizens which led President Taft to fear that the United States might be forced to invade Mexico? Try as he could, scraping the slums of the oil towns for gossip, Ambassador Wilson was able to present only seventeen cases, and as Lascurain proved in his answer, four of these had occurred prior to the revolution in 1910. In three of the seventeen there had been convictions and prison sentences, in two cases the accused were released because the complainants could not make positive identifications; three cases had never been heard of by the Mexican authorities; and with respect to the others, mostly killings by angry husbands, the police had not been able to capture the murderers.

And what were the "important international questions," the "grave disputes" between the two governments which had to be settled at once if Mexico wished to avoid intervention? Five in number, they were as follows: The Associated Press case, the Mexican *Herald* case, the Tlahualilo case, the Tampico oil taxes case, and the Mexican Packing Company case. For five years the Associated Press had been using direct government telegraph wires at certain hours during the day for the transmission of news between Mexico City and Laredo, Texas. The agreement was merely oral and upon its expiration the Mexican Government asked for a written contract containing certain new provisions. What the Associated Press demanded, and what the State Department and Ambassador Wilson urged, was that Madero let the Associated Press do business on its own terms. Madero declined to accede. As for the Mexican *Herald* case, the reply of the Mexican government gave these facts:

The Mexican *Herald* received a subsidy (\$50,000 annually) from the past [Diaz] government. The present government has outlined as its policy not to subsidize the press, and for this reason the Manager of the Mexican *Herald*, Paul Hudson, after insisting with the Min-

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ister of Gobernacion, without success, upon obtaining a new subsidy, started through *El Heraldo Mexicano*, printed in Spanish and controlled by Paul Hudson, a terrific campaign against the government, publishing reports of an exceedingly alarming nature which caused panic throughout the country. The chief editor, a Mexican citizen, was incarcerated because he had infringed upon the penal laws. The directors of the journal took advantage of the opportunity to suspend the publication of *El Heraldo Mexicano*, which did not yield any profits, and they now pretend to make charges against the Mexican government for the supposed losses caused by the suspension of the paper. The Mexican government has never dictated any order preventing the publication of the above newspaper.

The particular offense for which the editor was arrested is worth reciting. When Orozco inflicted his crushing defeat upon the federal forces at Rellano, eight hundred miles north of Mexico City, nothing was more important than that this news should have been given to the Mexican public without exaggeration. Owing to disturbed conditions in the City and the absence of soldiers, there was strong probability of a general uprising and wholesale disorder. In advance of the government announcement, *El Heraldo Mexicano* printed a sensational extra, exaggerating the defeat, declaring that Orozco was on his way to the City, and that Zapata and his bandits were near at hand, eager for murder and pillage.

Police were stationed about the building to prevent delivery of the papers, but the Hudson management carried bundles to the roof and threw them down to the mob of newsboys that howled below. But for the prompt action of another paper in printing the facts, nothing could have averted wholesale rioting. For suspension of the paper—entirely an act of Paul Hudson and never at any time ordered by Madero—Mr. Hudson asked damages of the Mexican Government in the sum of \$100,000, and handed the claim to Ambassador Wilson for collection.

The Mexican Cotton Estates of Tlahualilo, Limited, claimed damages in the sum of \$11,000,000 on the ground that the Mexican Government had permitted the change of a water-course that irrigated its property. The amazing feature of this “important international question” was that the Tlahualilo company was not

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American at all, but *British*. As the Mexican Government was able to prove, it was registered as a British corporation in Great Britain, February 3, 1903, and its capital was almost wholly British. The only possible American interest in the case was the fact that the resident manager was an American and a high member in "The Society of the Friends of the Ambassador."

The Tampico oil cases were nothing more nor less than a flat demand that the Mexican government abate a tax of one and one half cents per barrel upon oil. The tax was levied upon all oil producers alike, Mexican as well as foreigners. It was far less than that levied by the State of California, yet Wilson insisted that the tax was discriminatory, levied only upon American producers, and Knox made it an "important international question."

The Mexican Packing Company case rose out of the failure of the United States Banking Company in 1910, a shameful wreck causing widespread ruin, particularly to Americans. One of the few valuable assets of the ruined bank was a concession to the Mexican Packing Company, and the creditors naturally assumed that it would be applied to their benefit. A British bank, however, hit heavily by the failure, decided to possess itself of the Mexican Packing Company and made application for a transfer of the concession. There was grave question as to whether the Mexican Government had the right to make the transfer, and in addition, the American depositors were protesting vigorously against any such action. The British bank, however, employed Judge Wilfley to press its claim and straightway Ambassador Wilson and Secretary Knox included the matter in their list of demands.

These, then, were the "important international questions at issue with the Mexican government"—matters so vital to the honor, dignity, and welfare of the United States that the Taft administration hounded Madero to his death because of them! Two of them British, rather than American; two, private matters entirely; and one the effort of oil millionaires to escape taxation.

All of them, however, were distinctly American when compared with another claim that Ambassador Wilson pressed for full and immediate settlement. In the capture of Torreon in May 1911, some three hundred Chinamen were killed. The Chinese government de-

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manded damages, and cleverly employed Judge Wilfley to present the claim. The amount claimed by Wilfley was in excess of three million pesos, but the Mexican Government not only charged that one million and a half of this was to be Wilfley's fee, but also refused to admit that Ambassador Wilson's intimacy with Wilfley gave him the right to present a claim that had nothing whatsoever to do with the United States.

Not in all the history of diplomatic correspondence is there any parallel to this bill of complaint which Ambassador Wilson was allowed to serve in the name of the people, and, as if to give the transaction an additional touch of shame, the note was not given out for publication in the United States. It was meant for Mexican eyes alone, its purpose being to make Madero realize Henry Lane Wilson's power, and to let Madero's enemies know that they possessed the active support of the United States in whatever they chose to do. The hint was quickly taken, for on October 16th, Felix Diaz, nephew of Porfirio, incited the Vera Cruz garrison to revolt and seized the port. The brains of the conspiracy, however, was General Mondragon, whose return from exile had been permitted, and at its back were all of the old Científicos. The most astounding feature of the whole affair was that Ambassador Wilson, in the United States at the time on leave of absence, gave an interview to the Associated Press in which he fulsomely eulogized Felix Diaz, this man who was at the moment in armed revolt against the government to which Wilson himself was accredited. Nor did President Taft dismiss Wilson for this flagrant breach of diplomatic propriety, or even rebuke him.

The latent strength of Madero was never more evident than in the immediate collapse of the *cuartelazo*. Diaz surrendered on October 23d without even attempting to fight, but his sentence of death was commuted by Madero, and he was put in prison along with General Reyes, victim of an earlier fiasco. Friends begged the President to make both men pay the penalty so amply deserved by their treachery, but he refused, an act of mercy that was to cost him his own life.

## 29: Treachery Triumphant

**W**HAT toppled the Madero administration from its position of security was the recurring and imperative need for money. There was, to be sure, a surface appearance of prosperity, for despite the crushing expenses of the Orozco uprising, the books showed Treasury balances of about \$20,000,000,<sup>1</sup> and revenues were increasing. It was not in Madero's power, however, to wait upon the slow processes of economy. Railroads had to be rebuilt at once to meet the demands of the business element; vital public works, destroyed by the rebels, called for immediate reconstruction, and, most important of all, the people were pressing for a fulfillment of the land pledges. Although the majority of the huge estates were the products of theft and fraud and force, Madero shrank from confiscation, and with his advisers had worked out a fair purchase plan. What he needed, therefore, and at once, was millions. All through September and October the Finance Minister, Ernesto Madero, worked upon this loan, meeting with coldness and rebuffs from the great international banking houses of New York, London, Berlin and Paris, but finally coming into contact with a more complacent group of French provincial bankers. As a result of secret negotiations, arrangements were made for a \$50,000,000 loan, and Congress was asked for the necessary authorization, Madero withholding the name of the French syndicate as he feared the effect of adverse political pressure.

In the beginning of the democratic experiment, even persons of proved intelligence were firmly of the opinion that the legislative branch of government would prove the bulwark of free institutions, but after years of bitter experience not one vestige of this faith re-

<sup>1</sup> A favorite report to this day is that the Maderos looted the Treasury. On February 21st, two days after Huerta's installation, his Finance Minister certified to a Treasury balance of \$33,078,641.60 (Mexican). It is also the case that the Madero administration, despite its extraordinary expenses, added only \$20,000,000 to Mexico's bonded indebtedness, and half of the amount was for the maintenance of the parity fund in New York.

## Treachery Triumphant

mains. Made up, for the most part, of briefless lawyers, characterless orators, and professional politicians, the average Congress, no matter what the country, has come to be an agency of sheer obstruction, sometimes by reason of patronage squabbles or inflamed vanities, but more often because of secret controls exercised by "invisible government." Washington, Lincoln, and Woodrow Wilson had their hearts broken by the vicious antagonisms of rascals, demagogues, and charlatans in House and Senate—Juárez was dragged to the edge of ruin time and again by his Congresses—and now Madero, fighting to save his country, encountered the malignancies that seem to be inseparable from parliamentary bodies.

In the Chamber, men elected as Madero supporters suddenly changed color and went beyond the old Porfiristas in blackguardism and open defiance of the administration's wishes. Weeks were given over to bitter debate, and when the matter finally went to the Senate in January, Francisco de la Barra was joined by Manuel Calero. This Doheny representative, confronted by Madero with certain letters that he had been imprudent enough to write, resigned his post as ambassador to the United States and took the Senate seat to which he had been elected in July. These two, leading an opposition bloc, defeated every attempt to authorize the loan, even while making and inciting speeches that tore at the foundations of peace and stability.

The first week of February, 1913, found the Senate still in a twenty to twenty deadlock, but the situation held its danger for the opposition no less than for Madero. At any moment some senator might weaken, for of their number some were asses rather than traitors, and with \$50,000,000 for purposes of reconstruction, there was the certainty that Madero might strengthen his position to the point of impregnability. In addition, recently issued Treasury reports showed that the government revenues for the last six months of 1912 were twelve million pesos larger than for any similar period in the country's history, and there was the fear that even persistent lying could not longer conceal this prosperity from the outside world. Most disturbing fact of all, the amenable Mr. Taft was to step out of office on March 4th, and in none of Woodrow Wilson's utterances were the Mexicans able to find a single grain of comfort.

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With Mondragon as the head of conspiracy, therefore, the business of bribery and seduction was resumed and pushed.

On February 4th, Gustavo Madero received exact information of the plot. The paper put in his hands disclosed that General Reyes and Felix Diaz were to be released from prison, and the entire personnel of the Madero administration arrested and deposed. In the provisional government to be set up, General Reyes was to serve as president until Diaz could be elected formally, Mondragon was to be Minister of War, Rodolfo Reyes, Minister of Justice, and Huerta, Commander-in-Chief of the army. Generals Blanquet, Beltran, and Navarette, all signally honored by Madero, were named as parties to the conspiracy, and their inclusion led the President to laugh at his brother's story. Branding the list as a trick to win money from Gustavo, he forbade him to give the matter further consideration.

The conspirators, learning how close they had been to detection, and emboldened by Madero's sublime incredulity, decided that speed was their one salvation, and advanced the date of their uprising to February 9th. Even on the eve of the *coup*, it was a shabby undertaking that could have been stamped out easily had the President permitted precautionary measures. The Palace guards, three batteries of artillery, two hundred soldiers, and six hundred cadets from the military school at Tlalpam—these were all that Mondragon had been able to seduce.

Late on the night of February 8th, a Chapultepec forest guard was aroused by the rumble of artillery passing his house on the way from Tacubaya to the City. Convinced that mischief was afoot, he telephoned the Palace and told his suspicions to Adolfo Basso, the superintendent, who rushed to the home of Gustavo Madero. The quick mind of Gustavo leaped to the conclusion that the batteries from Tacubaya had been sent in by Beltran and Navarette, and with equal certainty he argued that their first act would be to release Reyes and Diaz. Assuming the loyalty of the Palace guard, time still remained to save the situation, so there he sped, only to be arrested by the traitors as he entered the *patio*. As shrewd as he was courageous, as resourceful as he was witty, Gustavo saw that the commandant was not sure of his men, and plunging into a

## Treachery Triumphant

series of stump speeches cleverly compounded of boisterous humor and emotional appeal, actually won the soldiers to his side. Without more ado, they threw their officers into cells, and at six o'clock General Villar arrived to take command.

At seven, the pompous Reyes, beard rampant, appeared before the Palace accompanied by some infantry and two hundred cavalry. All confidently expected that the gates would be thrown open to them, but, to their surprise, General Villar stepped forth into the plaza and announced that farther advance meant bloodshed. Taking it as a gesture, Reyes rode forward, only to fall at the first fire, and a panic seized his following. Upon the scene now came Felix Diaz and Mondragon, but despite the fact that three batteries were with them, they lacked stomach to face the machine-gun fire from the Palace roof, and hurried off to take refuge in the Arsenal.

In Mexico, more than any other country in the world, fate gives full indulgence to sardonic humor, delighting to destroy when danger seems past, and always choosing some apparent unimportance as a peg on which to hang tremendous events. General Villar was an able, loyal soldier; had he remained in command, the uprising would have been crushed in a day, and Mondragon and Diaz sent to join Reyes. Wounded by a random bullet, however, he was forced to retire, and the President again reached out for Victoriano Huerta and appointed him to chief command. There was bitter protest, but he remembered the old Indian's campaign against Orozco, and felt that this new and supreme proof of confidence would capture his loyalty.

Now, without the loss of a moment, commenced the development of a plot within a plot. From an inconsequential factor in the situation, Huerta had suddenly gained full control, and his subtle mind was not slow to grasp the opportunities suddenly presented. Why should he bother to put Felix Diaz in the presidency—that posturing fool and boudoir hero—when he himself was so much better fitted for the place? As he saw it, the two requirements were to convince the country and the world at large of Madero's weakness, and at the same time force the plotters to realize that he, Victoriano Huerta, was master of the situation, and must be dealt with.

With ten thousand men as against the eighteen hundred of Diaz,

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and possessed of artillery able to shatter the walls of the Arsenal, there was never a time when it was not within Huerta's power to have ended the uprising in twenty-four hours, but instead of that he staged a comic-opera war which lasted ten whole days. There were daily artillery duels, but only once was the Arsenal struck by a solid shot, while the Palace was hit but twice. Acting in perfect accord, both sides turned their guns everywhere except on each other, demolishing homes and business houses and murdering non-combatants as part of the plan to make the people eager for any sort of peace. General Felipe Angeles rushed in from Cuernavaca with his men, ready to end the farce, but Huerta ordered his arrest for insubordination, and held him pending the action of a court martial. Madero raged, but it was too late to change commanders, and the crafty Indian was glib with excuses. General Blanquet must be given time to recover from his grief at the death of Reyes, his great friend; General Navarette refused to fire on the Arsenal for fear of harming Mondragon, who had done him many favors in the past; the soldiers themselves had to be humored, as mutiny was rife—reasons as laughable as they were impudent, yet the President's helplessness barred him from showing his contemptuous disbelief.

The plotters came to realize Huerta's mastery of the situation as early as the 10th, and secret meetings were held daily in the interests of an amicable adjustment. By the 17th an agreement was reached that provided for Huerta's assumption of the provisional presidency; this arranged, nothing remained but the actual destruction of the existing government. At noon, therefore, Huerta presented himself before the President, and with rare malevolence of humor, declared gravely that he was now prepared to make an end of the rebellion. No sooner had he left than General Aureliano Blanquet entered, accompanied by Lieutenant-Colonels Riveroll and Izquierda, one Enrique Zepeda, Huerta's illegitimate son, and several army officers. Without preface, Blanquet stated that he came from General Huerta to demand the President's instant resignation.

Madero, shocked, replied that he could not, in honor, relinquish his post to any rebel force, whereupon Blanquet cried, "You are my prisoner!" The military aides of the President, standing by, drew their revolvers, and in the duel that followed, Riveroll,

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Izquierda and Marcos Hernandez, the President's cousin, were killed. By one o'clock, Vice President Suárez and the Cabinet members were arrested, and Gustavo Madero was seized while at luncheon with Huerta himself. By five o'clock every Madero adherent was in a prison cell, and Huerta and Blanquet addressed the people from the Palace balcony, announcing, "Peace has come." That night Huerta and Felix Diaz met at the American Embassy, embraced under the approving eye of Henry Lane Wilson, and publicly ratified their secret bargains.

This was the Cabinet that was agreed upon: Minister of Foreign Affairs, Francisco de la Barra, representing the Científicos; Minister of War, General Mondragon; Minister of Justice, Rodolfo Reyes; Minister of Public Instruction, Jorge Vera Estanol, Calero's ex-partner and closest friend, and a lawyer representing some forty American corporations; Minister of Finance, Toribio Esquivel Obregon, an alleged Liberal; Gobernacion, Alberto Garcia Granados, another Científico. As for Felix Diaz, he was to be made president at a general election, and one can imagine Huerta's inner mirth as he gave the solemn pledge.

With respect to Ambassador Wilson, from the start of the shameful affair to its finish, his conduct was carefully calculated to give aid and encouragement to the conspiracy. In not one of his dispatches to Washington is there the least evidence that he regarded the insurrection as a criminal attack upon a legally constituted government. He spared no pains to paint the collapse of the Madero government, grew lurid in describing imaginary "slaughters," and hailed each of Huerta's "fake" repulses as a "rebel victory."<sup>2</sup> Not once did he suggest to Diaz and Mondragon that they abandon their treachery, but on the other hand, he was persistent in his efforts to bring about the resignation of Madero. The President, appealing to Washington for relief from this pressure, declared in his cable that the Ambassador had openly hinted that American troops might be sent to Mexico, and begged fair treatment by President Taft, a plea that was ignored.

\* Nor is there any question as to Ambassador Wilson's possessing a

<sup>2</sup> These, and all other notes and cables quoted, are on file both in the State Department and in the American Embassy in the City of Mexico.

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certain amount of knowledge as to Huerta's plans. In a cable to the State Department, sent as early as the 16th, he gave them to understand that Huerta was planning decisive action. On February 17th, at 4 p.m., he cabled: "General Huerta just sent his messenger to me again to say that I may anticipate some action which will remove Madero from power at any moment." At ten o'clock the same night, he cabled again: "Blanquet's troops have been placed in charge of the National Palace, which is in accordance with the message sent by General Huerta that all purely Maderista troops were to be placed outside and soldiers upon whom he could depend would replace them. . . . I expect important events to-morrow." In a message to Consul Canada at Vera Cruz, sent on the 18th, no time given, the Ambassador said: "Blanquet's forces were transferred to the Palace last night and this accords with information Huerta has sent me as to the probability of a *coup d'état* to-day. I believe the end is in sight." In a message to Washington the same day, and dated "noon," *more than an hour before the arrest of Madero*, the Ambassador reported, "The supposition now is that the Federal generals are in control of the situation and the President."

It was to Ambassador Wilson that Huerta reported instantly after the arrest of Madero, and it was Wilson who arranged for the capitulation of the Arsenal, and brought Diaz and Huerta together in the Embassy that very night. Directly after this most friendly consultation, the two liars and traitors clasping hands and receiving the blessings of the representative of the United States, Gustavo Madero and Adolfo Basso were shot down in cold blood. That the President and Vice-President did not share the same fate was due to the fact that their resignations were needed. All through the day of the 19th, Madero and Suárez were pressed to resign, Huerta pledging them their lives and safe escort to Vera Cruz, where the Cuban minister had placed a boat at their disposal. In the late afternoon the resignations were signed and handed to Pedro Lascurain under solemn agreement that they were to be held by him until Madero and Suárez were on board the *Cuba*.

Huerta, for his part, ordered a special train for ten o'clock and notified the families of the two men to be at the station. Immediately upon learning that the signatures had been affixed, Huerta

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called a night session of Congress and forced Lascurain to present the resignations in shameless violation of a solemn pledge. Automatically succeeding to the presidency, Lascurain appointed Huerta to be Minister of Gobernacion, and then resigned, having held the presidential office exactly twenty-six minutes. Victoriano Huerta, the Indian, was now in supreme power by virtue of his superior craft in treachery, and his first official act was to send word to the poor, pitiful groups at the station, telling them that no train would leave that night.<sup>8</sup>

Even before this final proof of bloody intent, there was not a person of intelligence in Mexico who did not expect the murder of Madero and Suárez, yet the one man able to save them—Henry Lane Wilson—took no effective step. As the price of his indorsement of the Huerta-Díaz compact, it would have been simple for him to demand that Madero and Suárez should be sent to the Embassy and given the protection of the American flag, but he made no such demand. During the ten days of farcical warfare, upon the strength of a vague rumor that de la Barra was to be arrested, Wilson had officially warned Madero that such a course would cause “profoundest indignation in the United States,” yet he addressed no such note to Huerta in behalf of Madero and Suárez. The murder of Gustavo Madero and Basso left no doubt as to the deadly danger of the prisoners, and still he did not extend the protection of his flag or warn Huerta that assassination must stop.

On the afternoon of the 20th, Señora Madero was denied permission to see her husband, and hurried at once to Ambassador Wilson with a humble and pathetic appeal for help. He heard her coldly, made light of her fears, and rebuked her unworthy suspicions of Huerta. The unhappy woman then begged him to send President Taft a message that she and her husband’s mother had written, but even while accepting the paper, he assured her that it was unnecessary. The message was not received by Mr. Taft until after Madero and Suárez were dead.

The drama of treachery now rushed swiftly to its appointed conclusion. On the afternoon of February 22d the American Ambas-

<sup>8</sup> Manuel Marquez Sterling, the Cuban Minister, wrote a vigorous account of these transactions before leaving Mexico as a protest against the assassinations.

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sador was the host at a brilliant reception, and, their hands red with the blood of Gustavo Madero and Basso, Huerta and his fellows raised glasses in toasts to George Washington. That night, shortly before 12 o'clock, Madero and Suárez were butchered. At 3 o'clock, Huerta issued this official statement:

At 12:30 o'clock this morning, I called together my cabinet to report that Madero and Pino Suárez, who were detained in the palace at the disposal of the Department of War, were taken to the penitentiary in accord with a decision as a result of which that establishment was placed yesterday afternoon under the charge of an army officer for better security. When the automobiles had traversed about two-thirds of the way to the penitentiary, they were attacked by an armed group and the escort descended from the machines to offer resistance. Suddenly the group grew larger and the prisoners tried to escape. An exchange of shots then took place in which one of the attacking party was killed, two were wounded and both prisoners killed. . . . The Government promises that society shall be fully satisfied as to the facts in this case. The commanders of the escort are now under arrest and the facts above recorded have been ascertained so as to clear up this unhappy event.

Francisco Cardenas, the captain of *rurales* in command of the escort, followed with a more complete but entirely different story. Shortly after leaving the Palace, he averred, the two automobiles had been fired upon without effect, but near the entrance of the penitentiary, a second group of twelve men opened fire. Madero and Suárez, leaping from their car, were caught between the bullets of guards and assailants and shot to death. A more clumsy lie was never fabricated. Only a moron could have been induced to believe that Madero's friends would attempt a rescue by rifle-fire from ambush, with the darkness and the speed of the machines exposing the prisoners to danger equally with the guards. The crude tale was disproved immediately by the discovery that the two men had met their death at a point *beyond* the penitentiary, and to confirm the fact of cold-blooded murder, an autopsy disclosed that Madero had suffered but one wound, a bullet at the base of the brain. Without waiting for Huerta's promised investigation, or even troubling

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to make inquiries himself, Ambassador Wilson issued the following official statement:

In the absence of other reliable information I am disposed to accept the Government's version of the manner in which the deposed President and Vice-President lost their lives. Certainly the violent deaths of these persons were without Government approval, and if the deaths were the result of a plot, it was of restricted character and unknown to the higher officers of the Government. Mexican public opinion has accepted this view of the affair, and it is not at all excited. The present Government appears to be revealing marked evidence of activity, firmness, and prudence, and adhesions to it, as far as I have been able to ascertain, are general throughout the Republic, indicating the early re-establishment of peace. The Government as constituted is very friendly to the United States and is desirous of affording effective protection to all foreigners. For the present, American public opinion should deal with the situation calmly and accept with great reserve the lurid and highly colored stories which are being furnished by some few correspondents. The great majority of the correspondents here are endeavoring to deal fairly with the situation.

As a matter of truth, Mexican public opinion instantly repudiated Huerta's stupid explanation, knowing full well that the murders were cold-blooded and authorized officially. Nor was there any calm acceptance of conditions. A wave of horror shook the country, and in every State men rose to defy the rule of Huerta, the murderer. It was this very result that Ambassador Wilson hoped to evade by his ready acceptance of the official explanation, for, as he said in a later statement to the State Department:

I believe that in announcing publicly my acceptance of the government's version of the murders of these two men—and indeed, I could not, with reference to the gravity of the occasion take any other course—I adopted the surest method of allaying that singular and perverse sentimentality which frequently leads to the commission of greater crimes as punishments for lesser ones.

As a matter of course, there was no investigation. Huerta made none and Ambassador Wilson asked for none, and Cardenas was

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even promoted to the rank of major. Dripping blood, the assassins walked over the dead bodies to place and power, with the American Ambassador trotting behind them as if to show that he, himself, was in no degree a victim to any "singular and perverse sentimentality."

## 30: Huerta the Incredible

**V**ICTORIANO HUERTA threw back to the Dark Ages. Santa Anna, Iturbide, and Miramón had a surface culture, at least, and even the blood-lust of Diaz was curbed by a certain civilized regard for appearances, but the savage old Indian who now seized dictatorial authority was a primitive in every thought and impulse. Libertine, drunkard, murderer and thief, he looked upon power merely as a means to the vicious pleasures which poverty had hitherto denied him, and recognized no law except his own base appetites. At the time he laid his bloody paw upon the country, it was, comparatively speaking, orderly and peaceful. He left it a shambles.

The assassination of Madero and Suárez would have been sufficient in itself to arouse resistance, but Mexico knew Huerta, and was under no delusion as to the kind of government that he would give. Once having shaken off the paralysis of fear that kept them hopeless during the days of Diaz, the people were no longer afraid to fight for liberty and justice, and everywhere citizens commenced to gather for the purpose of armed resistance. In Sonora, Plutarco Elias Calles and Alvaro Obregon issued calls for volunteers; in Coahuila, the Governor, Venustiano Carranza, took the field at the head of the state troops, and in Morelos the Zapatas prepared for war.

Huerta, however, was by no means friendless. In his corruption and brutality, the forces of privilege saw rare opportunity for the restoration of a régime as profitable as that of Diaz, and all the resources of power and wealth, both in and out of Mexico, were put behind the usurper. Ambassador Wilson, as his part, set about forcing recognition of the blood-stained government by the United States. On the 20th, a few hours after Huerta's seizure of office, Wilson cabled his State Department asking for instructions as to recognition and stating "that it would be well to note that the pro-

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visional government takes office in accordance with the Constitution and precedents."

At the same time he took it upon himself to telegraph to all the American consuls in Mexico that the overthrow of Madero had "general approval," and specifically ordered partisan activities in these words: "The Senate and the House of Deputies are in full accord with the new administration. You should make this intelligence public and, in the interests of Mexico, urge general submission and adhesion to the new government which will be recognized by all foreign governments to-day."

Without waiting for an answer from his State Department, and proceeding entirely on his own initiative, the Ambassador then called a meeting of the diplomatic corps, and urged the necessity of instant action without waiting for governmental authority. On the day following—the 21st—he called upon Huerta with full intent to have the visit construed as an official recognition of the usurper's right to office.

Whatever Taft may have intended, the assassination of Madero and Suárez gave him pause, and the indefatigable ambassador now commenced the labor of removing this annoying hesitation. After formal acceptance of Huerta's lying explanation, Wilson wired the State Department on the 24th that "the City remains perfectly quiet, and evidently the tragedy of yesterday has produced no effect upon the public mind." Then, with rare audacity, he gave this amazing advice: "As from the published summaries of the London press it appears that a vast ignorance as to the actual situation prevails there, I would suggest that the *Times* correspondent in Washington have matters carefully explained to him."

The Sonora situation also exercised him no little, and while the body of Madero was still unburied, he sent a telegram to Mr. Hostetter, Consul at Hermosillo, directing him to do everything in his power to induce the rebels to accept Huerta as president, and authorizing him to make the statement that the majority of the Mexican states had already done so. When a list of these was demanded of him, however, he returned no answer, for the very good reason that no state had taken any such action. Even while the conservatives in Sonora counseled caution, federal troops invaded

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the State and in the same breath came news that Abraham González, beloved governor of Chihuahua, had been arrested, deposed, and then murdered by being thrown under a moving train. Over night, insurrection became revolution, and by vote of a military council, Carranza was named first Chief of the Constitutional Army. Roberto Pesqueira, a member of Congress who fled the city after Huerta's *coup*, had met Carranza and taken him to Sonora, urging his selection upon Obregon and Calles for reasons of age, reputation, and responsibility, but principally because Carranza was a civilian.

Ambassador Wilson blithely ignored the outbreak at first, deluging the State Department with cables announcing the "country's pacification," and when this course was made absurd by the facts, he changed to a policy of minimization. On February 27th, for instance, he announced the "surrender" of Zapata. On March 1st he cabled the lie that Carranza had "surrendered" unconditionally to Huerta and "that it looks now as though adhesion to the government would be general throughout the country, and unless unforeseen uprisings occur, I anticipate that conditions more peaceful than have existed in Mexico for two years will be prevalent within two weeks."

On March 7th he cabled that Carranza was practically "surrounded." On March 9th he had him "defeated." On March 11th he "crushed" him and on March 12th he had him "fleeing across the border, his forces captured." Coincidently he was urging the State Department to lend its assistance in getting money for Huerta from Wall Street, and imploring recognition of the murderer. Also, even while the blood of Madero was still wet upon the ground, he took up his celebrated "claims" and demanded immediate action.

On March 4, 1913, William H. Taft retired to private life, and Woodrow Wilson became President of the United States. The new administration marked more than a mere political change—it possessed all the values of a spiritual rebirth. For years the people had permitted financial oligarchies to rule in the name of Business and Prosperity, exalting profits above justice, subordinating human rights to property rights, and changing the whole national point of view by steady emphasis upon an aggressive materialism.

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The election of 1912 was a revolt against false gods—a return to the ancient faith—and Woodrow Wilson was less its product than its leader. More clearly than any man since Lincoln, he saw down to the underlying idealism of the American, and to its direction he brought clear, inspiring certainties. It was not only domestic reforms that he drove through—a great social justice code that marks America's closest approach to real democracy—but from the first, there was clear intent to lift international relationships out of sordid ruts.

Particularly had he shown interest in a new and nobler Pan-Americanism, built upon the granite of honor, faith, and friendship, and Huerta's appeal for recognition gave rare opportunity for its expression. Sternly refusing to countenance the bloody acts that had destroyed democratic processes in Mexico, and repudiating the "dollar diplomacy" of the McKinley, Roosevelt, and Taft administrations, he put the whole moral force of the United States squarely behind the Constitutionalists and against Huerta.

As he explained in a later address, "I am more interested in the fortunes of oppressed men, pitiful women and children than in any property rights whatever. The people of Mexico are striving for the rights that are fundamental to life and happiness—fifteen million oppressed men, overburdened women and pitiful children in virtual bondage in their own home of fertile lands and inexhaustible treasure. . . . So long as the power of recognition rests with me the Government of the United States will refuse to extend the hand of welcome to any one who obtains power in a sister republic by treachery and violence."<sup>1</sup>

For a time, however, the power of international finance succeeded in giving an effect of successful resistance to the force of President Wilson's idealism. In April and May, England, France, Spain, and Germany recognized Huerta, and every influence of Big Business was used to put his autocracy upon a firm footing. The Mexican Congress authorized a loan of \$100,000,000, but while Paris bankers took \$30,000,000, the remainder could not be placed.

<sup>1</sup> All of President Wilson's more important references to the "Mexican question" will be found in the Appendix, pages 387-389, arranged in such fashion as to constitute a clear, sequential development of his Pan-American policy and faith.

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A banking syndicate, however, made a railroad loan of \$27,000,000, and by threats of confiscation and death, some \$31,000,000 was extorted from the banks of Mexico City. An additional amount of \$20,000,000 was raised by hypothecating the income from the National Lottery.

Instead of the vigor, ability and high purpose so confidently promised b<sup>r</sup> Ambassador Wilson, the old Indian used the golden flood entirely for his own personal depravities, giving himself over to evil pleasures that soon fell into an unchanging routine. Arising at six in the morning, he went to a restaurant for his cognac. After a drive around Chapultepec Park he proceeded to the Café Colon, where he had coffee and more cognac. Breakfast was a lengthy affair, consuming several hours, and it usually constituted the sole opportunity for his ministers to consult concerning the transaction of public business. If they could break through the ring of boon companions he would give them a few minutes, otherwise the unhappy officials were compelled to pursue him from place to place, getting his signature to documents as he left one restaurant or entered another.

He lunched usually at his country place, and after a nap his afternoons were given over to cock-fighting. At five o'clock he went to *El Globo*, a public restaurant, where he drank cognac with his friends until dinner, and when dinner was completed he hurried to the theater, rarely sitting in front, but preferring the more intimate contact of the stage and the dressing-rooms. So it went on, with variations of viciousness, day after day. Not only were the honesties and decencies disregarded, but even the humanities.

Enrique Zepeda, passing as Huerta's nephew, but commonly regarded as his illegitimate son, had been appointed governor of the federal district by reason of the prominence gained by acting as Ambassador Wilson's friend and confidant. One night, after a drunken orgy, Zepeda and a roystering crowd went to Belem prison, and commanded the warden to produce Gabriel Hernández, one of the noblest of the young generals evolved by the Madero revolution. No sooner was Hernández brought into the room than Zepeda shot him down and then built a bonfire in the *patio* for the crema-

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tion of the body.<sup>2</sup> Zepeda, however, developed a habit of talking too much in his cups, and was later removed from the scene by a mysterious bullet.

Such was the man whom Ambassador Wilson and the *concessionaires* held up to the world as a fit ruler—"the hope of fourteen million Mexicans"—burning with desire "to protect society and to restore peace." Nor did Huerta even have the decency to save the faces of his advocates, for even while they praised, he betrayed his fellow-traitors. Repudiating the American Embassy agreement in its entirety, he not only refused to call an election, but either exiled or deposed his associates in treason. Felix Diaz, promised the presidency, was banished along with General Mondragon; de la Barra was shipped to France, and the Diaz-Mondragon cabinet was expelled and replaced by Huerta puppets.

In July President Wilson, who had been considering the Mexican situation carefully, commenced to act. His first step was the acceptance of Henry Lane Wilson's resignation, accompanied by a fuller and even more vigorous assertion that Huerta would not be recognized. Every fact in the case supported him in his position. Putting aside the moral issues involved, Huerta was neither *de jure* nor *de facto* the president of Mexico, for he had not been chosen by the people, he was not supported by a duly elected Congress, and successive defeats made him virtually a prisoner in the Capital. President Buchanan, confronted with a similar situation in 1858, refused to recognize any government until it was "obeyed over a large majority of the country, and by the people, and was likely to continue." Moreover, he declared boldly that since Miramón was "a military usurper, having expelled the constitutional president from office, it would have been a lasting disgrace to the Mexican people had they tamely submitted to the yoke."

President Wilson's second step was the dispatch of ex-Governor John Lind of Minnesota to Mexico for the purpose of presenting these three demands to Huerta: Immediate cessation of hostilities; his resignation; and an early and free election in which he should not be a candidate.<sup>3</sup> In no sense was this "meddling." American

<sup>2</sup> Trowbridge, *Mexico Today and Tomorrow*, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup> For full text of instructions to Mr. Lind, see Appendix, pages 387-389.

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concessionaires with their greeds, Taft with his "mobilizations," and Henry Lane Wilson with his bold interferences, were far more responsible for Huerta than the Mexicans, and President Wilson was not trying to "get in" but to "*get out.*" The Dictator, as a matter of course, paid no heed to Mr. Lind, but Mexico and the world were given new proof of the attitude of the United States, which was the one purpose. Speaking before the Congress of the United States on August 27, 1913, the President met the clamor of the interventionists with a larger and franker development of his international policy.

He said, in part: "We are glad to call ourselves the friends of Mexico, and we shall, I hope, have many an occasion, in happier times as well as in these days of trouble and confusion, to show that our friendship is genuine and disinterested, capable of sacrifice and every generous manifestation. The peace, prosperity, and contentment of Mexico mean more, much more, to us than merely an enlarged field for our commerce and enterprise. They mean an enlargement of the field of self-government and the realization of the hopes and rights of a nation with whose best aspirations, so long suppressed and disappointed, we deeply sympathize. We shall yet prove to the Mexican people that we know how to serve them without first thinking how we shall serve ourselves."

Even as the jingo press of the United States, secretly inspired, clamored for a "firm policy," meaning intervention, Huerta indulged in another of his spasms of self-revelation. A senator, Belisario Domínguez, who had been particularly courageous in denouncing the Dictator, was taken from his hotel at night and murdered in cold blood. Deputy Serapio Rendon was also assassinated, and when Congress dared to resent the occurrence, Huerta surrounded the building with troops and arrested one hundred and ten deputies, following this by dissolving the Congress entirely and vesting himself with supreme legislative power. Soon after this he assumed the supreme judicial power also, and wiped out the departments of War, Finance, and Gobernacion, arrogating their authorities and functions to himself.'

A so-called presidential election, held on October 26th, was a farce. Felix Diaz, the one candidate daring to return to the coun-

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try, escaped arrest and death in Vera Cruz only by taking refuge on an American battleship. Huerta was declared elected, but as he could not succeed himself according to the Constitution, the new and subservient Congress nullified his election, thus continuing him as Dictator. On October 27th, President Wilson, speaking at Mobile, Alabama, made the most important of all his utterances with respect to Latin-American affairs, making clear the difference between exploitation and development, between concessions and investments, standing for "human rights, national integrity and opportunity as against material interests."<sup>4</sup>

Each day brought nearer Huerta's end. In the field his troops were meeting with crushing defeat; the paper peso dropped from 49 to 29, and bankers and merchants had been blackmailed until they were drained dry. Only the Huerta family was prosperous, two sons collecting commissions on every government purchase, and another Huerta administering a chain of gambling-houses. In his annual message to Congress, delivered December 2, 1913, President Wilson made clear the facts even as he answered those critics who attributed Mexican disorder entirely to his refusal to recognize Huerta:

"Even if the usurper had succeeded in his purposes, in despite of the constitution of the Republic and the rights of its people, he would have set up nothing but a precarious and hateful power, which could have lasted but a little while, and whose eventual downfall would have left the country in a more deplorable condition than ever. But he has not succeeded. He has forfeited the respect and the moral support even of those who were at one time willing to see him succeed. Little by little he has been completely isolated. By a little every day his power and prestige are crumbling and the collapse is not far away. We shall not, I believe, be obliged to alter our policy of watchful waiting."

The dawn of 1914 saw the Constitutionalists in control of three-fourths of the country; Obregon, Calles, and Villa holding the north, with Zapata master of the south. It was not only moral support that the United States contributed to these results, but material aid as well, for in February the embargo on arms and supplies had

<sup>4</sup> For full text, see Appendix, pages 389-391.

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been lifted, President Wilson explaining his action in these words: "It was intended to discourage incipient revolts against the regularly constituted authorities of Mexico. Since that order was issued the circumstances of the case have undergone a radical change. There is now no Constitutional Government in Mexico; and the existence of this order hinders and delays the very thing the Government of the United States is now insisting upon, namely, that Mexico shall be left free to settle her own affairs and as soon as possible put them on a constitutional footing by her own force and counsel."

In his desperation, Huerta now resorted to the ancient "Alamán Idea," resolving to force war with the United States in the hope that an unthinking nationalism might impel Mexicans to put revolution aside. Throughout the winter, American warships had been in Mexican waters for the purpose of protecting their nationals, and on April 9th, Huerta's soldiers in Tampico suddenly arrested the officers and men of the U.S.S. *Dolphin*. Some were seized on shore and others were dragged from a whaleboat flying the American flag at bow and stern. Admiral Mayo, in command of the squadron, refused to rest satisfied with the release of the prisoners and demanded that the flag of the United States be saluted by the military commander of the port.

After days of evasion on the part of Huerta, President Wilson laid the whole matter before Congress, setting forth the details of the incident and explaining that it was in no sense an isolated case, but one of a series plainly showing "that the Government of the United States was being singled out, and might be singled out with impunity, for slights and affronts in retaliation for its refusal to recognize the pretensions of General Huerta to be regarded as the constitutional provisional President of the Republic of Mexico. The manifest danger of such a situation was that such offenses might grow from bad to worse until something happened of so gross and intolerable a sort as to lead directly and inevitably to armed conflict.

... Mexico is torn by civil strife. If we are to accept the tests of its own constitution, it has no government. . . . If armed conflict should unhappily come as a result of his attitude of personal resentment toward this Government, we should be fighting only Gen-

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eral Huerta and those who adhere to him and give him their support, and our object would be only to restore to the people of the distracted Republic the opportunity to set up again their own laws and their own Government. But I earnestly hope that war is not now in question. I believe that I speak for the American people when I say that we do not desire to control in any degree the affairs of our sister Republic. Our feeling for the people of Mexico is one of deep and genuine friendship, and everything that we have so far done or refrained from doing has proceeded from our desire to help them, not to hinder or embarrass them. . . . The present situation need have none of the grave implications of interference if we deal with it promptly, firmly and wisely."

Congress, in a joint resolution, held the President "justified in the employment of the armed forces of the United States to enforce his demand for unequivocal amends for certain affronts and indignities," but disclaimed "any hostility to the Mexican people or any purpose to make war upon Mexico." Huerta continuing his policy of insult and defiance, American naval forces took possession of Vera Cruz on April 21st, just as the German steamer, *Ypiranga*, bearing arms for Huerta, was coming into port. On April 22d, Huerta gave his passports to the American *chargé d'affaires* and declared a state of war.

President Wilson, as he was frank to admit, had a double motive, having in mind not only the satisfaction of national honor and dignity, but equally the opportunity afforded for advancement of the Constitutional cause. Vera Cruz stood as Huerta's one remaining source of strength, for its Customs receipts were his principal revenue, and through the port came also regular shipments of arms and munitions from Germany. In taking the step, he felt that he had the sanction of the Constitutionalists, for Carranza, when told of it in advance, had entered no protest, only exacting that there should be no advance from Vera Cruz, a pledge which President Wilson gave publicly.

Having produced exactly the situation he had planned, the cunning old Indian now beat his breast at the sight of Mexican soil shamed by the feet of invaders, and called upon all patriots to lay aside domestic differences and join in repelling a common enemy.

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Carranza, fearful of popular feeling, gave virtual assent to the proposition, repudiating his explicit agreement with the United States, and even General Obregon so far yielded to demagoguery as to threaten an invasion of Arizona. This unexpected turn of events compelled a readjustment of President Wilson's plans, and the arms embargo was restored, a step that had instant results. Villa, operating in the north with American munitions, had captured Monterey, and was waiting at the Rio Grande for new shipments preparatory to advancing on Saltillo and San Luis Potosí. The embargo, therefore, brought his whole campaign to an abrupt halt, and the hot-tempered chieftain publicly denounced Carranza for falling into Huerta's trap, declaring his own faith in Wilson's pledge that there would be no advance from Vera Cruz. As a consequence, the First Chief subsided, Obregon gave up his invasion of Arizona, the embargo was lifted, Villa resumed his aggressive campaign, and American troops remained in Vera Cruz to cut off Huerta's revenues and military supplies.

The occupation, as a matter of course, disturbed the whole of Latin America as it alarmed Mexico, and to meet this revival of old distrust, President Wilson now put forward a further development of his policy with respect to American relations. On April 25th, Argentina, Brazil, and Chile tendered their good offices, and in his letter of immediate acceptance, the President proclaimed his faith in mediation as a substitute for war, and affirmed the *family-hood* of the free republics of the Americas. The conference adjourned in June without practical results, for it was seen by then that Huerta's elimination was a matter of days, but great values had been gained for American solidarity.

Henry Lane Wilson had boasted, "Huerta will fight to the last, and if eventually overthrown, will go down in the midst of the ruins." Instead of that, July saw him sneaking through the night to Vera Cruz—as cowardly as he was drunken—soon fleeing the country to find refuge in Spain. For a year he devoted himself to plotting with other American reactionaries in the United States, and in July, 1915, went to Texas with intent to incite Border turmoil. Arrested and imprisoned for violation of the neutrality laws, he died, as the result of his vices, in January, 1916.

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GENERAL OBREGON, taking possession of the Capital after Huerta's flight, ejected Francisco Carbajal, who assumed to act as provisional president, and laid firm hands upon the machinery of government. By the agreement of 1913, Carranza was to be vested with executive power until conditions permitted the holding of an election, but even as he prepared to take control, ugly dissensions tore at the fabric of unity. Whatever the First Chief's abilities, they were balanced by jealousies that made him resent the successes of others. Always envious of the popularity of Villa and Obregon, he had spared no effort to hamper them, even at the expense of the revolution, and bitter feeling had been particularly aroused by his unceasing attempt to build up a military reputation for General Pablo González, a leader utterly without capacity. Obregon, sincerely patriotic, bore injustices with patience, but it was not so with Villa. Not only did his own temper work upon him, but various reactionary influences made haste to gather around the headlong chieftain for the purpose of inflaming his anger and persuading him to claim executive power.

A new civil war was now on, Villa taking the field openly, joined by Zapata, and as a consequence, Carranza decided to establish his seat of government at Vera Cruz, the last American soldier having been withdrawn on November 23d. As Obregon marched out of the Capital, Zapata marched in. After a few weeks, however, he left suddenly for Morelos, and Villa now took possession, whimsically installing General Eulalio Gutiérrez as provisional president.

These happenings, hailed by the privileged interests as patent proof of the Mexican people's incapacity for self-government, were used in a new campaign for intervention, and again the United States rang with the old clamor. President Wilson, however, while admitting perplexity and distress, refused to change his policy in any degree, and in a speech on January 8, 1915, reiterated his principles in these words: "I hold it as a fundamental principle, and

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so do you, that every people has the right to determine its own form of government; and until this recent revolution in Mexico, until the end of the Diaz reign, eighty per cent. of the people of Mexico never had a 'lock-in' in determining who should be their governor or what their government should be. Now, I am for the eighty per cent. It is none of my business, and it is none of your business, how long they take in determining it. It is none of my business and it is none of yours how they go about the business. The country is theirs. The government is theirs. The liberty, if they can get it, and God speed them in getting it, is theirs. And so far as my influence goes while I am President nobody shall interfere with them. . . . Have not European nations taken as long as they wanted and spilt as much blood as they pleased in settling their affairs, and shall we deny that to Mexico because she is weak?"

On January 29th, Villa and Gutiérrez fled the City under threat of Constitutional attack, a last act being the appointment of another provisional president, General Roque González Garza. Obregon entered as Villa fled, but soon deciding to carry the war into the enemy's country, he left for the north on March 11th, whereupon Zapata returned to take possession of the Capital a second time. The Obregon campaign held no bright promise of success in the beginning, for while Villa himself was an ignorant, brutish guerrilla, he had at his back General Felipe Angeles, a soldier trained to his trade at Chapultepec and in Europe, and admittedly the most scientific fighting man ever produced by Mexico. When the two armies came face to face at Celaya in April, Angeles saw at once that numbers and position were in favor of Obregon, and insisted upon avoiding battle, but the furious Villa, drunk with belief in his own invincibility, ordered that the issue be joined. Even so, victory hung in the balance for three days, and then the non-arrival of Villa's ammunition train turned the struggle into a massacre. Thousands of Villa's men, blundering into flooded fields fenced with barbed wire, were either drowned or shot down like sheep. In July the important city of Aguascalientes surrendered to Obregon, and as Zapata, alarmed by these reverses, fled again to the wilds of Morelos, Pablo González entered the City and took his turn at lording.

These whirling changes in the fortunes of war, and the added

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fact that there seemed to be no end in sight, moved President Wilson to turn again to the Latin-American republics, and the representatives of Argentine, Brazil, Chili, Bolivia, Uruguay, and Guatemala became a conference body to decide what Mexican leader, or leaders, held out the largest hope of rallying the people for a return to peace, law, and order. Villa and Carranza both had their partisans, but after careful consideration, the six Latin-American countries unanimously recommended the recognition of the latter. On October 9, 1915, therefore, the United States recognized Carranza and the Constitutionalists as the *de facto* government, and followed this by an embargo on the shipment of arms to all others.

Villa, furious at his rejection, resolved upon a last desperate bid for victory, and under the direction of Angeles, commenced a truly remarkable march over the mountains into Sonora, where Maturana was besieging General Calles. The combination of the two forces meant defeat and loss of the State, and, in his extremity, Carranza asked the United States for permission to move troops through Arizona over American railroads, his one chance of getting aid to Calles in time. The permission was given and Carranza's army, moving from Eagle Pass to Agua Prieta, met the onrush of the confident Villa, and defeated him decisively, a reverse that sent him flying to Chihuahua to operate thereafter as a mere bandit chieftain. It was his fury of hatred against the United States that inspired the night raid on Columbus, New Mexico, where he killed, burned, and looted, an act entailing new and tragic complications.

Several weeks before, as a result of the repeated protests of the United States against a series of unchecked outrages along the Border, President Carranza himself had proposed that each country in the future should have the right to pursue marauders across the line. In its letter of acceptance, under date of March 10th, the American State Department had said: "The Government of the United States understands that in view of its agreement to this reciprocal arrangement proposed by the *de facto* government, the arrangement is now complete and in force, and the reciprocal privileges thereunder may accordingly be exercised by either government without further exchange of views."

It was under the plain letter of this agreement that President

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Wilson sent General John J. Pershing into Mexico to pursue Villa and his band of murderers. Both to make clear the punitive character of the expedition, and to check the furious campaign of the interventionists, President Wilson issued a public statement on March 25th in which he did not hesitate to charge a "traffic in falsehoods with intent to create an intolerable friction between the Government of the United States and the *de facto* government of Mexico for the purpose of bringing about intervention in the interest of certain American owners of Mexican properties."

The presence of American troops on Mexican soil for a second time, however, aroused national feeling, and Carranza, again ignoring an explicit agreement, branded the Pershing expedition as an act of bad faith, ending with the threat that unless it was immediately withdrawn, the Mexican Government would be left "no other recourse than to procure the defense of its territory by means of arms." The American reply, after reciting the facts and Carranza's agreement, said that "the Government of the United States would surely be lacking in sincerity and friendship if it did not frankly impress upon the *de facto* government that the execution of this threat would lead to the gravest consequences."

Shortly after this exchange of notes, several hundred Mexican soldiers attacked a small body of American cavalry, killing several, and later, at Carrizal, in Chihuahua, Pershing's soldiers were ambushed by Carrancistas and twenty killed. For four years President Wilson had been standing like iron against an "international campaign" fought with every resource of money, power, and publicity, and these bloody incidents, coming on the heels of the Columbus horror, gave new force to the attack. The presidential campaign in the United States was just commencing, but steadfastly ignoring every demand of political expediency, the President held to his policy of friendship and patience. Carranza, presenting a request for a joint commission, was met cordially, and throughout the summer and fall of 1916, sessions were held. These came to nothing as a result of the Mexican policy of obstruction and delay, but President Wilson, though disappointed, suffered no change in mind or spirit, for, as he publicly said, "What makes Mexico suspicious of us is that she does not believe as yet that we want to serve her. She believes

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that we want to possess her, and she has justification for the belief in the way in which some of our fellow citizens have tried to exploit her privileges and possessions."

Wilson's "Mexican policy" figured as a principal issue in the election, and although every possible lie was employed in confusion and distortion the people of the United States understood it and endorsed it. The growing stability of the Carranza government, and a steady improvement in Border conditions, led to the gradual withdrawal of Pershing's troops, the last leaving Mexican soil on January 2, 1917. The United States then proceeded to recognize the Carranza administration as a *de jure* government, and on January 7, Henry P. Fletcher was sent to the City of Mexico as the duly accredited ambassador.

Throughout the civil war, Carranza had met the legislative needs of government by decrees, but now that peace was restored, this autocratic, haphazard method had to be brought to a quick end. The planned reenactment of the Constitution of 1857, however, was soon seen to be unwise, if not actually impossible, for in sixty years, much water had gone over the Mexican dam. Socially, economically, financially, and industrially, it was another world from that of Benito Juárez, and as a result, a convention was called to frame a new constitution, based upon the noble document of 1857, but containing innovations necessitated by changed conditions. This convention, assembling in Queretaro in February, 1917, divided into two groups—radical and conservative—but the former established a powerful majority almost at the very outset. By reason of the bitter attack leveled against it, both in the United States and in Europe, there is a general impression that the Constitution, as adopted, is a choice combination of anarchy, socialism, and communism. Under analysis, however, it is seen as no more than an honest, sincere attempt to right certain obvious evils, being in many respects far less radical than the amended constitutions of North American states such as Wisconsin, Colorado, and California. When the ancient wrongs of Mexico are considered, even the attempted reforms take on an effect of mildness.

Diaz, in the name of development, tossed away the wealth of his country—gold, silver, water-power, oil, timber—and while the na-

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tive watched millions flow across the Border, he himself sat in poverty—landless, wretched, ignorant, and virtually enslaved. The makers of the Constitution, therefore, put first emphasis upon the conservation of natural resources, then, seeing plainly that the Mexicans would never be a people of consequence until each citizen had his economic chance, they put second emphasis upon the land question. The ownership of all natural resources was declared to be vested in the nation, and the development policy set forth was “by the nation for the people.” In asserting Mexico’s title to her mineral wealth, there was also specific inclusion of “petroleum and all hydrocarbons—solid, liquid and gaseous.”

The *ejidos*, wrested from communities by Diaz, were to be restored to their owners, and there was the statement that “necessary measures shall be taken to divide large landed estates: to develop small landed holdings and to establish new centers of rural population with such lands and waters as may be indispensable to them.” The Constitution likewise prohibited monopoly of any kind whatsoever, forbade exemption from taxation, and pointed the way for the transfer of taxation from *productive* land to *idle* land.

These provisions, as a matter of course, were attacked as confiscatory. When it is remembered how the great estates were formed, how the public resources were squandered, and how the privileged classes and favored *concessionaires* were exempted from taxation, a policy of confiscation would have had sanction in justice if not in law. The Constitution, however, was at pains to uphold the sanctity of private property, every step in its program being taken with due regard to accepted international practice. Instead of confiscation, as charged, it was only the right of eminent domain that was asserted, with full machinery for valuation and indemnification. As a further protection, Article 14 stated explicitly that “no law shall be given retroactive effect to the prejudice of any individual whatsoever.”

Another clause which has been subjected to fierce attack provided that “all contracts and concessions made by former governments from and after the year 1876 which shall have resulted in the monopoly of lands, waters and natural resources of the nation by a single corporation or individual, are declared subject to revision,

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and the executive is authorized to declare those null and void which seriously prejudice the public interests."

As a result of judicial decisions, frankly due to the control of the courts by the privileged classes, every civilized country has been made to endure the preposterous assumption that knavish officials, municipal councils or state legislatures, have the power to steal or squander the rights of the people, and that no matter how open the dishonesty, how flagrant the spoliation, the people are bound by these acts, generation after generation, to all eternity. In the United States, particularly, long-term franchises have been sold to public service corporations, and communities and states have had to sit helpless under judicial decisions that interpreted the "sanctity of contracts" as covering and protecting every form of larceny and pillage. By denying this outrageous assumption and asserting the right of the people to subject the acts of officials to review and revision, the Mexican Constitution rendered a service to all peoples as well as to its own.

Article 33 followed the old constitution in reaffirming the right of the Executive "to expel from the Republic forthwith" any foreigner whose activities constituted a menace, and a clause in Article 27 provided that:

Only Mexicans by birth or naturalization and Mexican companies have the right to acquire ownership in lands, waters and their appurtenances, or to obtain concessions to develop mines, waters or mineral fuels in the Republic of Mexico. The Nation may grant the same right to foreigners, provided they agree before the Department of Foreign Affairs to be considered Mexicans in respect to such property, and accordingly not to invoke the protection of their Governments in respect to the same, under penalty, in case of breach, of forfeiture to the Nation of property so acquired.

Franklin K. Lane, when Secretary of the Interior of the United States, once analyzed the discords in international relations, and held a principal cause of trouble to be that "Latin-America has known the American chiefly as a seeker after concessions, a land-grabber and an exploiter. Even where the American has bought property, as many have who to-day hold perfectly legal title to the

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land, they are absentee landlords, and every just criticism that the Irishman has had to make against the absentee English landlord can be made against the absentee American landlord in Mexico. He does not become a part of Mexico; he does not throw in his lot with the Mexicans. He is willing to spend his money there and employ labor, but he has nothing in common with the people of the country. The Mexican feels that the American goes there only to get rich out of the land and labor of Mexico; that he comes to exploit, not to develop."

It is a judgment, however, which may not, in fairness, be confined to Americans. England, France, Germany, and Holland have also made distinguished contributions to the type. For years these *concessionaires*, coming from every quarter of the globe, have swarmed over Mexico like locusts, corrupting and intriguing, keeping always above the law of the land by the threat of appeal to their own governments. What the Constitution sought to do was to end the rule of this privileged class, insisting that the foreigner rest content with the rights of the Mexican himself. As a matter of fact, the provision was in no sense new or original, for the Diaz concessions all contained a similar clause, the difference being that Diaz never attempted its enforcement.

The Articles relating to labor and social welfare, while revolutionary indeed when compared to the laws of Diaz, were no more than reproductions of the domestic reforms inaugurated by Woodrow Wilson between the years 1912-1916, and the statutes of such states as California and Colorado. Among them were the eight-hour day, prohibitions against child labor, minimum wage commissions, equal pay for equal work without regard to sex, public markets, workmen's compensation, safety and health measures, the right of workers to organize, boards of conciliation and arbitration, free employment offices, and insurance against old age, sickness and unemployment. In no single instance is there a provision in the industrial code that does not have the sanction of practice in either the United States or Europe.

The outcry against Mexico's alleged denial of religious liberty has no firmer ground than the other attacks. In prohibiting private ownership in church property, the Constitution of 1917 merely

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reiterated the Constitution of 1857. It was Benito Juárez who first attacked the rapacities and usuries of religious institutions, and the men at Queretaro simply reaffirmed the laws that had been in existence for sixty years.

With respect to church buildings, rectories, colleges and schools, the one right is that of *use*, but religious liberty itself is guaranteed by Article 24, which says that "Every one is free to embrace the religion of his choice and to practice all ceremonies, devotions or observances of his respective creed, either in places of public worship or at home." What Mexico says to all religious denominations today is no more and no less than what Juárez said to the Roman Catholic Church in 1857: "You have got to get out of the land monopoly business, the loans and mortgage business, and the banking business. We want you as religious institutions, but we do *not* want you as commercial and political bodies." It is noteworthy that when the *concessionaires* were "emphasizing the destruction of religion," all Protestant bodies in Mexico filed written statements with the State Department that they were not meeting, nor had they met, with any oppression or even interference.

It may not be said that the Constitution of 1917 was a perfect document, but it can be said that it did not contain a single improper purpose or unworthy aspiration. What it sought to do—all that it sought—was to substitute equal justice for special privilege, to make the people partners in the development of natural resources, and to lift individual and national life to levels that knew the sun. Dealing with ancient evils, cancerous in their secret spread, it was a pledge, rather than a performance, but every condition seemed to justify the belief that the pledge would be kept.

## 32: Disintegration and Death

**I**N the presidential election that followed the convention, no candidate offered himself against Carranza, and the First Chief entered office more richly blessed by favoring circumstance than any predecessor. With the exception of Villa and Zapata, who persisted merely as threats, the country was at peace, and all factions, military and civil, were united in support of the administration. General Obregon, as his contribution to public confidence, accepted the post of Secretary of War, while General Calles, the other "man of the hour," put his executive genius to work on state problems as Governor of Sonora. The new Constitution made explicit declaration of the reforms that were desired, and a Liberal Congress, honest and ardent, stood ready to enact these reforms into organic law.

With respect to the United States, a man sat in the White House whose heart beat in full sympathy with the struggles and aspirations of the Mexican people. Whatever Woodrow Wilson's mistakes, and they were many, the purity of his idealism was above challenge, and even as he stood like granite against the clamor of concessionaires, his words and acts had brought Americans into clearer and finer understanding of the "Mexican question." He asked nothing of Carranza save the wholesome neighborliness that would give friendship for friendship, sincerity for sincerity, so that the two republics—possessing the same enemies and the same goals—might march the path of progress arm in arm, shoulder to shoulder. With all the passionate democracy that dominated his heart and soul, Woodrow Wilson hoped for the salvation of Mexico—the happiness of her people—and stood ready to offer active and unbounded coöperation without one hampering condition.

In considering Venustiano Carranza's refusal to take advantage of his tremendous opportunities, it must be borne in mind, at the very outset, that there was not one drop of blood in his veins that thrilled to the ancient aspirations of the Mexican race. Descended

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in a straight line from the Spanish *conquistadores*, he was born to wealth, reared in ease, and accustomed to power. Fifteen years of his early manhood were spent in the City of Mexico as a senator from Coahuila, and the most careful study of the records fails to discover any single instance of revolt or even protest against the tyrannies of Diaz, although there is no evidence that he was a partner in any of the corrupt and venal transactions of the régime.

At the time when he risked life and fortune by throwing in his lot with Francisco Madero, Carranza was fifty-eight years old. If it is admitted that his action was inspired by patriotism—and there are no facts to throw doubt on this assumption—it is still the case that fifty-eight is not an age that lends itself to fundamental change. It is a time when the habits of life and thought, as well as temperamental traits, have hardened to iron, and while some emotional outburst may present an effect of deep disturbance, it is usually like sheet lightning that has no bolt to stab beneath the surface. The whirl of revolution—the hurly-burly of battle—all contributed to certain disruptions, but when peace restored him to a more familiar environment, habit soon asserted itself, and the Carranza who took the president's chair was the Carranza who had been fifty-eight years in forming. He was again the aristocrat and the Spaniard—vain, domineering, intolerant—and corroded by hates, suspicions, and distrusts.

Even had he not hated the reforms commanded by the Constitution, the President's temperamental defects prevented any honest attempt to bring these reforms about. Lacking faith in himself, he saw only faithlessness in others, and labored under an invincible inability to surround himself by men of force, vision, and initiative, fearful that they might dim his own glory. The demobilization of the army was a necessary first step in a campaign of reconstruction, yet it was a step from which his power-greedy soul shrank back as from an abyss. What more certain than that the professional soldiers would turn against him and strip him of the authority that had come to be his passion? Better to let them feed fat on corruption than incur their anger. Yet this involved the waste of millions sorely needed for the revival of trade, industry, agriculture, and

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education, so, necessarily, means must be found to induce the people to sit silent under betrayal.

Even to-day, when the dust of his ruin has settled, it is not possible to write of Venustiano Carranza in full certainty, for a vast secrecy hid his mental processes from the knowledge of men, and he went to his death without once unlocking the door. Every fact in the case, however, indicates that in his extremity he turned to the old "Alamán Idea," and set deliberately to work to build his power on race hatred, national fears and jealousies. Instead of accepting the friendship and aid so freely offered by Woodrow Wilson, he would reject them openly and contemptuously, meeting courtesy with insult, honesty with injury, piling insolence upon insolence until at last he would stand as the one fearless champion of his country against the aggressions of the "Colossus of the North," still the same ravening beast, although now hiding its greed under a mantle of hypocrisy. Turmoil could be continued, justifying the retention of the army, excusing the failure to give promised reforms, and the people, drunk on the wine of national pride, aflame with ancient hates, would make no murmur against poverty and wretchedness.

As never before, it was a safe game to play, for Woodrow Wilson, out of his idealism, had thrown aside the menace of force in his dealings with Mexico, resting his hope of amicable relations entirely upon honor and fair intent. He had beaten down interventionist clamors one after the other, winning the people to understanding and support, and it was upon these policies of sympathy, charity, and forebearance that Carranza now apparently prepared to play, feeling, perhaps, that there was no risk in insult, or even in injury up to a certain danger-point. Friendship was rejected, favors received and then spat upon, diplomatic notes either left unanswered or answered insolently, and so, slowly but surely, Carranza's plan came to full fruition.

The policy of hate reached its culmination in 1918, at a time when the United States was bending every thought and energy to the prosecution of the war against the Imperial German Government. With respect to Article 27 of the Mexican Constitution, nationalizing oil lands, there was no quarrel with the fundamental principle,

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President Wilson at all times supporting Mexico's effort to protect her natural resources from spoliation. In note after note the United States gave this full agreement, only insisting that the provision against non-retroactivity be observed, and that there should be no confiscation. Throughout 1917, Carranza skirted the edge of evasion with regard to these matters, but on February 19, 1918, when German victory seemed a question of weeks, he issued a decree that made Article 27 retroactive, and ignored the Constitutional provisions for proper court proceedings. Under the guise of taxation, American owners of oil properties in Mexico, regardless of the time and method of acquirement, were to be forced to admit the government's ownership, and on April 2, the American State Department entered a vigorous protest of which this is the heart:

. . . While the United States Government is not inclined to interpose in behalf of its citizens in case of expropriation of private property for sound reasons of public welfare, and upon just compensation and by legal proceedings before tribunals, allowing fair and equal opportunity to be heard, and giving due consideration to American rights, nevertheless the United States cannot acquiesce in any procedure ostensibly or nominally in the form of taxation or the exercise of the right of eminent domain, but really resulting in the confiscation of private property and arbitrary deprivation of vested rights. . . . In the absence of the establishment of any procedure looking to the prevention of the spoliation of American citizens, and in the absence of any assurance, were such procedure established, that it would not uphold in defiance of international law and justice, the arbitrary confiscations of Mexican property, it becomes the function of the Government of the United States most earnestly and respectfully to call the attention of the Mexican Government to the necessity which may arise to impel it to protect the property of its citizens in Mexico divested or injuriously affected by the decree above cited.

It is doubtful if Carranza really meant to enforce his decree, but in any event, the American note made him realize that the danger-point had been reached. For the effect on Mexican opinion, however, he made no answer to the note, and while postponing the operation of the decree to July 31st, let it be understood that domestic details were entirely responsible. Postponement followed

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postponement, but these were covered by various other decrees with respect to drilling permits, the collection of "royalties and rentals," the confiscation of wells, and so forth, so that the Mexican people were led to believe that it was only a question of days when the great President Carranza would seize the oil properties of the Americans, and challenge the hypocritical Woodrow Wilson to resent it.

The success of the Alamán Idea was even greater than Carranza himself could have dreamed. Reforms were forgotten and looting ignored, while the people gave themselves over to the intoxication of an unreasoning nationalism, acclaiming the President as one sent by God to champion the cause of Latin America against the accursed Gringo. The inexhaustible resources of Mexico soon yielded an annual revenue in the neighborhood of \$80,000,000, but of this amount only dribbles were devoted to public service, agriculture, and education. At least sixty per cent. went to the army, although officers absorbed so much of the loot that the private soldiers were forced to find their profit by selling rifles and ammunition to the bandits that overran the country.

With every aim and purpose of the revolution lost to sight, the Government was nothing more than a ponderous, expensive mechanism for its own maintenance, permitting only such progress as promised profit to the régime. General Obregon was no longer a member of the Cabinet, having resigned in disgust, and one by one Carranza had broken with his former friends and associates, surrounding himself with a crew of leeches, grafters, and sycophants. By 1919, murmurs began to be heard, and in an effort to still them, the President called General Calles into the Cabinet as Secretary of Industry, Commerce, and Labor, but this was soon seen to be no more than a gesture. Luis Cabrera continued to hold every rein of authority through adroit ministration to Carranza's colossal vanity, while Juan Barragán, a handsome young soldier of fascinating address, increased in power as First Chief of the parasites. Despite his dynamic energies, General Calles eventually found himself tied hand and foot—a Gulliver among Lilliputians.

How long the people might have endured is a matter of conjecture, but suddenly smoldering discontent was fanned to flame

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by the presidential candidacy of Alvaro Obregon. Leaving his ranch in Sonora, he commenced an exposure of the failures and corruptions of the administration in words that cut like knives. "The penal colony," he declared in one bitter speech, "is not large enough to hold poor men for stealing bread, while bandits drive through the streets in costly automobiles, fruits of their systematic robberies, the witnesses having been assassinated in the cells of the penitentiaries. There will be no justice in Mexico while the school teachers live on charity while mistresses pass them, loaded down with jewels."

Carranza, although barred from reëlection by the plain provisions of the Constitution, had no thought of parting with power, especially to the man he most hated, for his very obligations to General Obregon were at all times an offense against his egotism. As a consequence, General Pablo González announced his candidacy and his elated friends were at pains to let it be known that he had the backing of the administration. It was a mistake of magnitude, for not only was Don Pablo's sudden wealth a scandal, but the murder of Emilio Zapata was still fresh in the public memory. Under the direct orders of González, a Colonel Guazardo had "deserted" the army, and offered himself and a band of his soldiers to the guerrilla chieftain. The methods adopted to allay the suspicions of Zapata were brutally thorough, for Guazardo not only robbed and burned, but even went so far as to massacre government troops. Eventually yielding to these proofs of sincerity, Zapata laid aside his caution, and while dining with Guazardo, was shot down in cold blood.

Realizing his blunder, Carranza suddenly shifted his plans and, in October, 1919, General Calles, Obregon's chief supporter, was summoned to Queretaro. Without parley, the President declared conditions proved that neither Obregon nor González could be elected, making it imperative to select a new candidate. "Cabrera will arrive to-morrow," he said, "and we will then decide what is best for the country." Strenuously protesting against interference with the freedom of the election, General Calles begged the President to reconsider his determination, but he spoke to deaf ears.

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Two days later, the presidential candidacy of Ignacio Bonillas was announced, and though his proclamation came ostensibly from a political club in Queretaro, it issued in reality from the private car of President Carranza. Bonillas, then Ambassador to the United States, had spent most of his life in South America and other foreign countries, and aside from his mastery of English and a nice taste in clothes, was generally regarded as an amiable nonentity. Without delay the whole power of the Carranza administration was put behind him, and while the candidacy of González was only mildly discouraged, that of Obregón was subjected to organized attack. The exact purpose of the President can never be known with certainty, but of the many theories advanced, it would appear most probable that his original idea was to put Bonillas into the presidency, secure the elimination of the constitutional provision against reëlection, and then return to the presidency himself, the plan followed by Porfirio Diaz in 1880 with Manuel González.

In February, 1920, General Calles resigned in protest against the Government's course, but before making his action public begged an interview with the President. Instead of granting the request, Carranza sent Barragán as his emissary. Patiently, painstakingly, Calles recited the obvious facts of Mexican history, pointing out the many betrayals and the fierce suspicions that had been bred in the people by these treacheries.

"Who touches the freedom of elections," he said to Barragán, "invites revolution. For the last time I speak as a friend. Tell the President that it is not yet too late for him to save himself and the country. He must throw out the thieves and reactionaries who are betraying the revolution. He must give up his effort to force Bonillas upon the people. I know, you know, and he knows, that already more than two million pesos has been stolen from the government to push the candidacy of this weakling. If he does not do these things—if he persists in his present infamous course—the people will rebel. Not shouting politicians, but men who know how to fight and who have always been ready to die for their country."

"Will you rebel?" asked Barragán.

"I will be one of many," was the answer.

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Seemingly impressed by this interview,<sup>1</sup> President Carranza abated his activities for a while, but they were soon resumed with even greater vigor. Boldly and openly, General Calles left the City for Sonora, his home State, where Adolfo de la Huerta sat as Governor. To him, and to his other friends, General Calles explained the situation, and plans were made to push the Obregon campaign with such energy that Carranza would be compelled to recognize the futility of antagonism. This was soon accomplished, for despite the prodigal squandering of government money, the Bonillas candidacy languished to a point where the poor man dared not show himself in public. Drunk with his dream of power, Carranza merely changed his plans, not his purpose, and now set to work to goad Obregon and his adherents into armed revolt, no doubt figuring that he could easily crush the uprising and use it as an excuse for suspending the election and continuing his rule indefinitely.

So far as the surface was concerned, the President had firm ground for his confidence. General Obregon and General Calles had been out of the army for four years, and in that time neither money nor favoritism had been spared to put military control in the hands of an administration clique. To be sure, Pablo González might be expected to show bitterness, but his hatred of Obregon was counted on to hold him in line, and even if this failed, other "pet generals" would soon pull his teeth. Confident of the army's support, therefore, Carranza proceeded to force the revolution. Supporters of Obregon were arrested by the hundreds, and many were murdered and assassinated. Guazardo, for instance, shot down two Obregon partisans "in the social interests of the community."

As these outrages produced no result, official announcement was made in early April that five thousand federal troops would be sent into Sonora to "restore order." Adolfo de la Huerta, the Governor, immediately registered an indignant protest, declaring that the State was at peace, undisturbed by trouble of any kind, and that troops were not needed or wanted. While telegrams went back and forth between Hermosillo and the Capital, the news flew that an attempt had been made upon the life of General Obregon, then in Tampico.

<sup>1</sup> The details of the Queretaro interview with Carranza, and the discussion with Barragán, were dictated to the author by General Calles in 1921.

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This failing, an order of arrest was then issued, but Obregon met the danger in his usual bold fashion. Knowing that the arresting officers would shoot him down, under pretense of resistance, he slipped into Mexico City by night and surrendered himself publicly.

On April 9th, Carranza sent final answer to de la Huerta, stating flatly that troops *would* be sent into Sonora and accusing the Governor and his administration of treachery and rebellion. That very night Sonora severed relations with the federal government, and when the news reached the City, administrative circles broke into a cheer, crying, "Ten more years of Carranza!" Where the President erred was in his failure to estimate the force of change. Down to 1910, the control of the army was the one and only essential to success, but Madero had made the people understand their power and had taught them how to use it. General Calles, appointed to military command in Sonora, took the field with citizen soldiers, and such was the strength of the civilian forces that they quickly dominated Sonora, Chihuahua, and Sinaloa without a battle. Guerrero rose, other states followed, and what resulted was not revolution against the Carranza government but wholesale desertion. The people, long sick of betrayal and corruption, withdrew support, and the rotten structure of administration collapsed over night.

General Obregon, regarded as a hostage, succeeded in escaping from the Capital, and Carranza, looking about him in dismay, saw that his one remaining reliance was General González. Everything that this man was and had he owed to the favoritism of the President, but now, in the hour of need, he offered cold-blooded bargains instead of the whole-hearted pledge of support that common decency commanded. Would Carranza be for him for president? How much money could he expect? While this sordid discussion went on, Michoacán, Morelos, Tabasco, and Zacatecas joined the list of insurgent states. As the overwhelming nature of the landslide to Obregon became apparent, the avarice and ambition of González gave way to fear, and on May 4th, without a word to Carranza, he assembled his command and marched off in the direction of Puebla.

Up to date, the revolution had moved forward without a battle, and this very bloodlessness, strangely enough, added to Carranza's confidence instead of impairing it. Issuing a manifesto of defiance

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to the "rebels," and denying the reports of his resignation, the President suddenly announced that the seat of government would be transferred to Vera Cruz. Here again was a plan that presented every surface indication of success. A certain amount of chaos would be precipitated immediately, a fact counted upon to win back the support of the business class. Cándido Aguilar, Carranza's son-in-law, was believed to control the State of Vera Cruz, and this seemed to assure safe occupation of the port, with the sea at his back and the Customs receipts in his hands. Securely intrenched, with disorganization fighting for him, the President felt that he had only to sit idle while Obregón and González tore each other's throats in a struggle for supremacy.

The flight from the City on May 6th was in the nature of a complete removal. Thirty trains bore the officials of the administration, the Permanent Commission of Congress, the Supreme Court, the archives of government and the entire Treasury, together with hordes of parasites and their mistresses. The armed escort consisted only of a few troops of cavalry, some infantry, and cadets from the Military College, but this occasioned no apprehension among the Carrancistas, as fighting was not expected. Carranza argued, shrewdly enough, that González would not attack, preferring to occupy the evacuated Capital, and that his flight would have a clear way to the mountains where Aguilar's troops were supposedly waiting to escort the presidential trains to Vera Cruz.

González, truly enough, watched the exodus from the right flank without a move to stop it, and then hurried into the Capital. Proceeding without halt, the doomed hegira passed Otumba and Apizaca in safety, and even at San Marcos there was only a skirmish. From Cuernavaca, Obregón sent orders to capture and disarm the President's following, but to notify Carranza personally that "if he desires to go on to Vera Cruz, every guarantee will be given to him, also an adequate escort which will accompany him until he embarks on whatever steamer he selects."

Ignoring the offer, Carranza pursued his way, and on the 11th reached Rinconada, where the escort sent by Aguilar was to be met. Even as cheers went up at the sight of troops gathered at the station, a hail of bullets beat upon the long line of trains. Colonel Guadalupe

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Sanchez had betrayed Aguilar, seizing Vera Cruz in the name of the rebellion, and the men waiting at Rinconada were not friends, but enemies. Even without the element of surprise against them, the administration forces were not prepared for battle, and the caravan, after fighting for two days, fled in disorder. The President, accompanied by a handful of friends, succeeded in escaping on horseback, and as Vera Cruz was now barred to him, he aimed for Queretaro or else Coahuila, his native State. The peaks folded in around the fugitives, and the first news of their fate came on May 21st in the form of a telegram from Barragán, announcing that the President had been shot and killed.

The last tragic days of Venustiano Carranza may not be set down in absolute accuracy, for as many stories have been told as there were eye-witnesses, and many of these stories, in the course of time, have suffered dramatic revision as well as downright contradiction. Out of the confusion, however, certain facts have come to stand clear, and these permit Carranza's end to be traced with some approach to exactitude.

As the fugitives threaded the mountain paths the problem of protection was a grave one, for the disaster at Rinconada had resulted in the death or flight of the entire armed escort. At the village of Patla, however, the party was joined by a body of troops under command of one Rodolfo Herrera. Never at any time had this soldier of fortune served in Obregon's forces, or been numbered among his supporters, but he had earned some notoriety as an adherent of Pelaez, an independent chieftain operating in the State of Vera Cruz in the pay and under the instructions of American petroleum companies. In March, two months before, Herrera had surrendered to Carranza and was assigned to the command of General Mariel. It was to this commanding officer that he now reported, pledging allegiance anew, and furiously asserting his unalterable hostility to Obregon.

Carranza not only accepted Herrera's protestations without suspicion, but felt that there might be other like-minded bands near at hand. General Mariel, therefore, with such force as could be gathered, was ordered to go ahead in search of these hoped-for recruits, and the entire protection of the President was intrusted

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to Herrera. General Murguía, in command after the departure of Mariel, has told the straightest and most connected story of the last night, his account running as follows:

"When we reached the little village of Tlaxcaltenango on May 20, Herrera urged a halt, pointing out that the town was perfectly defended as it had only one entrance and one outlet. The town is oval shaped, surrounded by *barrancas*, where only natives bred in the hills can travel on foot. Consulting with Carranza, I suggested that we continue further, as I did not feel comfortable in the place. The President, however, had perfect confidence in Herrera, and a heavy rainfall, coming up suddenly, gave added weight to Herrera's insistence.

"Herrera, who had shown every courtesy to Carranza during the trip, personally directed Carranza to a hut and arranged the bed. This was the first night I had not slept with the President, but after four nights without sleep, I accepted a hut near the church, about four hundred yards away from Carranza's hut. I was awakened around four o'clock in the morning by heavy firing. It was dark, and mountain clouds were hanging low, so it was impossible to see more than a few feet. My staff, jumping to their feet, reported that we were surrounded by attacking forces, shouting 'Viva Pelaez!' I hurriedly ordered my men to take possession of the church tower, but it was impossible. We tried to form a line of street skirmishers, but the attacking force was too strong. After four of my men had been killed, I was forced to take to the hills until daylight."

Manuel Aguirre Berlanga, a Cabinet minister who shared the hut with Carranza, has furnished the most detailed and best authenticated story of the assassination itself. After supporting the Murguía account he stated:

"With the exception of two officers, only civilians were in the hut with Carranza. Herrera personally arranged the President's bed in a corner, and after profuse assurances of solicitude, left to make a round of the outposts. At four o'clock in the morning, we were awakened by heavy firing. The hut was surrounded and the firing was directed towards the corner where the President slept. We heard him cry out, and saw him attempt to rise but he could not. One guard was shot at the door of the hut and a second inside the hut.

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No one else was hurt. The firing was over in a few minutes, then Herrera's men entered, placing everybody under arrest. After entering the men fired five shots into the dead body of the President.

"We did not know Herrera had ordered the killing of Carranza until we asked for a doctor, when the soldiers said: 'Herrera was doctor enough for all of us.' In this way we learned that Herrera was directly responsible for the killing. After making the trip through the mountain passes on foot, we were freed, Herrera making some of our weaker members sign papers saying that Carranza had committed suicide, which was absolutely false, as Carranza was shot seven times. During the signing of the papers, Herrera boasted that he had received orders from General Pelaez to kill Carranza without fail."

### 33: The Obregon Administration

HERE is no more amazing phenomenon than a Mexican post-revolution period. One day the nation is prostrated by civil war, its industries paralyzed, its finances in collapse, the general effect one of irreparable disaster; the next it is at peace and at work, with no larger evidence of bloodshed and chaos than a shattered building here and there, or several bodies that the burial squads have overlooked. The professional-soldier class is without stomach for last-ditch fighting, and the losing side quits definitely once the issue has been decided; the people, usually unconcerned with the outcome, are only too happy to get back to their affairs, and the remarkable recuperative powers of the country, due to its wealth of natural resources, does the rest.

Pablo González took possession of the Capital after Carranza's flight, but Obregon followed quickly, and González had neither the physical nor the moral courage to hold his advantage by an appeal to arms. On May 24th, Adolfo de la Huerta, Governor of Sonora, assumed control of government as Provisional President, and straightway, in due accordance with revolutionary precedent, there was law, order, and a convincing appearance of stability. The young executive, suave and adroit, preached a gospel of harmony, and his friend and mentor, General Calles, taking the post of War Minister, supplied the iron hand.

Felix Diaz, attempting to start a revolution, was quickly subdued and sent out of the country instead of being placed before a firing-squad. Such governors as fancied the rôle of independent sultans were taught a lesson through the experience of Esteban Cantu, who had set up a principality in Lower California with Monte Carlo as a model. A secret movement of government troops removed him from office without bloodshed, and this action, together with a few sentences of exile, cleaned up an intolerable situation. The Yaqui Indians, returned to their lands in Sonora, settled down happily to peace and agriculture, and from inveterate rebels turned into law-

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abiding citizens. One piece of pacification which did not make any large appeal to the outside world—especially did it insult and offend the people of the United States—was the pardoning of Francisco Villa. This professional bandit and murderer, instead of being hanged as an habitual criminal and homicidal maniac, received an extensive ranch in Durango, together with \$50,000 for pin money. Thus induced to see the benefits of a peaceful life, he left the fastnesses of Chihuahua, and became a staunch upholder of the established order, especially vociferous in the support of property rights.

With the country at peace and at work, an election was called for September 8th, and General Obregon was chosen for the four-year term commencing December 1st. González had been a candidate in the beginning, but when Obregon's election was seen to be a certainty, withdrew from the race, issuing a statement that rang with patriotic fervor. Before his buncombe ceased to echo, however, the Hero of a Hundred Defeats attempted to start an uprising in Monterey, his right hand in treason being that same Colonel Guazardo who first rose to infamy through the Zapata assassination. The movement enlisted no popular support whatsoever, but de la Huerta, instead of hanging, rested content with banishment.

From his bed of pain, President Wilson had been closely watching the progress of Mexican affairs, eager for an opportunity to aid. When the free and peaceful election gave final proof of the restoration of law and democratic processes, he let it be known, unofficially, that he would be glad to discuss and remove every question that Carranza had raised to divide the two republics.<sup>1</sup> In October, therefore, Roberto Pesqueira came to Washington, carrying credentials which gave him full power to act; and informal discussions with Secretary of State Colby resulted in an exchange of correspondence that was given to the press on October 20th. The letter of Mr. Pesqueira set forth Mexico's readiness to establish a joint commission to settle every damage claim, also to enlarge and strengthen the arbitration machinery provided for in the Treaty of 1847. With respect to Article 27, Mr. Pesqueira asserted that "not one square

<sup>1</sup> The author of this volume served as President Wilson's representative in the negotiations, interviewing Generals Obregon and Calles and President de la Huerta in the City of Mexico, and accompanying Mr. Pesqueira to Washington.

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yard of property has been confiscated, nor do we intend to deviate from this policy. President de la Huerta and President-elect Obregon have also made public declarations to the effect that Article 27 of the Mexican Federal Constitution is not and will not be interpreted as retroactive or violative of valid property rights." Secretary Colby's answer spoke confidently of a speedy and happy outcome and praised the de la Huerta government for its "stability, sincerity, and a creditable sensitiveness to its duties and their just performance."

At once the American financial groups interested in Mexico, led by the oil companies, launched a bitter protest against recognition; a turn for the worse in President Wilson's illness removed him from active participation in the matter, and the State Department fell into strange hesitations and alarms. The attack of the *concessionnaires* would have been repelled, undoubtedly, but without warning the Mexican Government issued a public statement that deprived Mr. Pesqueira of authority to continue the discussions. The reason, as afterwards revealed, was that powerful Republican politicians had succeeded in convincing the Mexican Government that it could not afford to deal with Woodrow Wilson. An election had just been held, Mr. Harding was to take office on March 4th, and for four years at least, Mexico would have to do business with a Republican administration. President-elect Obregon was led to believe that if Mexico accepted recognition from Wilson, he might expect enmity, but that if negotiations were broken off, the incoming Republicans stood ready to overwhelm him with friendship and favors.<sup>2</sup>

Waiting patiently, Mexico hailed March 4, 1921, as a "day of deliverance," and Woodrow Wilson was assailed as the country's "most terrible enemy," "the man who, to our disgrace, has occupied the post once held by Washington and Lincoln." Disillusionment was not delayed. One of President Harding's first acts was to name Senator Albert B. Fall as his Secretary of the Interior—a man hated throughout the length and breadth of Mexico. Two days before he took office, Fall boasted that Obregon would have to "sign on the dotted line" with respect to these five points: (1) Mixed claims com-

<sup>2</sup> This was the explanation given to me by Mr. Pesqueira after his return to the City of Mexico.

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mission; (2) Joint boundary commission; (3) Non-retroactivity of Article 27, and religious liberty for Americans; (4) Agreements for the protection of American citizens and their property rights in Mexico in the future; (5) Inclusion of all agreements in a formal protocol as a condition precedent to recognition.

There was no doubt in the mind of the Mexican Government as to what Fall meant by "protection of American citizens and their property rights." As plainly as though it had been put in bold words, the smooth phrase was a demand for a return to the days of Diaz when a foreign *concessionnaire* was above the law. It meant the validation of shady titles, exemption from taxation, grants of water rights and water-power, and every form of special privilege. These demands made the intent crystal clear. Quite obviously, the Obregon government had to have money from outside in order to drive forward with the program of reconstruction and development that was necessitated by Mexico's economic breakdown. These loans were to be the price of his agreement to the Fall conditions. If he yielded, well and good, while if he refused it would be merely a matter of waiting for the collapse of his administration, and when chaos had come, marching American soldiers across the Border in the name of peace and order.

Seeing the trap into which he had fallen, President Obregon moved shrewdly to take away all just cause for complaint. The Carranza decrees were set aside, denunciations of oil lands were prohibited, and orders were given to issue drilling-licenses and pipeline permits generously and quickly. In conclusion, the President spoke through his Foreign Office on April 2, 1921, pledging his own and his country's honor that Article 27 would never be interpreted in a confiscatory sense nor given retroactive application in any degree.

As an answer to this substantial compliance with every honest American demand, Secretary of State Hughes announced publicly on June 7th that "the fundamental question which confronts the Government of the United States in considering its relations with Mexico is the safeguarding of property rights against confiscation. Mexico is free to adopt any policy which she pleases with respect to her public lands but she is not free to destroy without compensation,

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valid titles which have been obtained by American citizens under Mexican laws. . . . The question of recognition is a subordinate one but there will be no difficulty as to this, for if General Obregon is ready to negotiate a proper treaty, it is drawn so as to be negotiated with him, and the making of the treaty in proper form will accomplish the recognition of the Government that makes it. In short, when it appears that there is a government in Mexico willing to bind itself to the discharge of the primary international obligations, concurrently with that act its recognition will take place."

Addressed, as it was, to a government of proved stability, a government that had restored peace, law, and order, and coming, as it did, on the heels of President Obregon's public statements pledging the nation's honor, the Hughes ultimatum was deliberately insulting. Obregon, however, contented himself with the brief reply that the Constitution gave him no power whatsoever to sign a treaty, and raced forward with domestic reforms calculated to produce economies and stimulate internal developments. With Adolfo de la Huerta as Secretary of the Treasury, and General Calles as Secretary of Gobernacion, army reductions were followed by the inauguration of a reclamation and irrigation program; lands were granted to hundreds of villages, and radical tax reforms put in force; twenty-one long-closed banks were reopened, and millions of pesos spent on railroad rehabilitation; laws against gambling and commercialized vice were accompanied by health and sanitation measures; home crafts were revived, and above all, the free school system was restored, and a drive commenced against adult illiteracy.<sup>8</sup>

The imposition of certain taxes on petroleum gave the *concessionaires* the excuse for which they were looking; intensive propaganda spread the alarm that American interests were being pillaged by Mexican rapacity, owing to the confiscatory nature of the taxes, and two warships were rushed to Vera Cruz. Now was felt the full effect of Woodrow Wilson's speeches and policy, for the people of the United States were not deceived as in other times, and the hostile attitude of public opinion compelled the Harding administration to

<sup>8</sup> President Obregon's own report on the progress of his administration, printed in *New York World*, June 27, 1921.

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realize the danger of precipitating a war. Accentuating this popular appreciation, President Obregon presented a complete set of the facts in the case. During the Diaz régime, American oil companies paid no taxes of any kind, neither export imposts nor even import duties on machinery and supplies, and the taxes imposed by Madero, Huerta, and Carranza were virtually nominal. A comparison of oil taxes levied by the United States and Mexico proved conclusively that the former were higher in every grade,<sup>4</sup> and as for the cry of "confiscation," a carefully compiled table showed that only the year before one American company had made net profits of more than \$21,000,000.<sup>5</sup>

Intervention was what had been counted upon, and with this hope lost to them, the *concessionaires* admitted defeat. Shortly thereafter, the representatives of the American oil companies journeyed to the City of Mexico, and as a result of frank discussion, differences were composed and a program of equitable development agreed upon for the future. In the early summer of 1922, Secretary de la Huerta met the International Committee of Bankers in New York, and on June 16th an agreement was reached and signed which lifted the reproach of bankruptcy. Since 1914 Mexico had paid nothing to her foreign creditors, and there was now acknowledgment of a principal amount of \$517,000,000—government bonds and the railroad debt—together with an interest in arrears item of \$207,000,000. Under the agreement, \$87,000,000 in bonds, maturing between 1923 and 1928, were extended until 1933; the \$207,000,000 of accrued interest exchanged for scrip, payment on which was to be postponed until 1928, and then staggered over an additional forty years without interest; current interest between 1923 and 1928—a sum of \$21,000,000—was also to be paid in scrip. For its part, the Mexican Government agreed to pay \$15,000,000 in 1923, \$17,500,000 in 1924, \$20,000,000 in 1925, \$22,500,000 in 1926 and \$25,000,000 in 1927, and as guarantee, pledged the entire oil export tax, ten per cent. of the gross revenue of the National Rail-

<sup>4</sup> "Principles Governing Mexican Taxation of Petroleum," by Valentin Garfias, *Mining and Metallurgy*, No. 170, 1921.

<sup>5</sup> The Doheny interests—Mexican Petroleum Co., Pan-American Petroleum and Transport Co., and the British-Mexican Petroleum Co.

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ways, and the entire net operating revenues of such railways. After this five-year period, there was to be a full resumption of service on the debt.<sup>6</sup>

This settlement, conceived and put through principally by Thomas W. Lamont, was far more helpful and generous than Mexico could have dared to hope. The Huerta bonds and other protested issues were not included in the list of international obligations; the extension of \$87,000,000 in bonds relieved the Government of a painful and expensive refunding operation; Mexico's obligation to maintain sinking funds for the retirement of certain bonds was waived over a five-year period, a tremendous saving, and there was also an outright gift of millions. Not only was interest waived on the accrued interest item of \$207,000,000 for the period from 1914 to 1923, but the forty-five year amortization was freed from interest charges; the scrip accepted for this amount had only a market value of \$4,500,000 at the time, and, by the same test, the scrip received for \$21,000,000 of current interest between 1923 and 1928 was worth just \$1,000,000, a total loss of \$222,000,000 on these items alone. In addition to these sacrifices, the railways bond-holders waived the right of foreclosure guaranteed by their liens, and in return for tangible security, accepted merely the guarantee of the Mexican Government. In return, Mexico made solemn pledge to restore the railways to private ownership in as good condition as when seized.

Left "holding the bag" by these agreements—deserted by the various interests it sought to serve—the Harding administration decided to reverse itself. In May 1923, John Barton Payne and Charles B. Warren journeyed to Mexico as special representatives of the United States, and as a result of four months of strenuous conversation, the announcement was made that diplomatic relations were to be resumed. Mr. Hughes had said publicly and repeatedly that recognition would not be forthcoming until Mexico had signed a treaty conceding every American demand, but these assertions were swallowed by him with his usual good grace in such matters. All that Obregon did was to repeat his assurances that Article 27 would

<sup>6</sup> Statement issued by International Committee of Bankers, 15 Broad Street, New York City, January 14, 1926.

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never be given retroactive effect, and to agree to the appointment of claims commissions.

To all appearances, things were never so well with Mexico. International relations rested on a sound working basis for the first time in years; the army was in steady process of demobilization; solvency seemed to have been obtained and prosperity assured; the public service gave hope that Mexico's greatest need—civic virtue—had been developed; the disappointments and injustices of the agrarian policy were excused on account of the difficulties attendant upon the inauguration of a tremendous experiment, and on every hand there was optimism and enthusiasm. Confidence was raised to the pitch of conviction when it became known that de la Huerta had refused to become a candidate for the presidency in 1924, pledging his aid to General Calles.

Resigning from the Cabinet in August to commence his campaign, almost from the first General Calles was made the target for an insidious propaganda that steadily grew in violence. He was assailed as a Bolshevik, a pupil of Lenin, a supporter of the Third International, and a firm believer in a "program of confiscation." These attacks were accompanied by an equally adroit adulation of de la Huerta as a safe man, one who would give labor its rights, but no more; a true patriot, but a statesman with sufficient vision to appreciate foreign friendship. The hand of the great landed proprietors was easily seen, and there was also a keen suspicion that foreign influences were not idle, yet no alarm was aroused. It was regarded merely as the old attempt to sow dissension, and while de la Huerta was known to be excitable and ambitious, there was his pledged word not to run, and the weight of many obligations.

At every point he was the creation of two devoted friends. Calles had made him governor of Sonora; Calles and Obregon had put him in the office of Provisional President, the place that the former might have had for the asking; Obregon had appointed him Secretary of the Treasury and honored him in many ways, and Calles, before announcing his candidacy, had offered to stand aside for de

<sup>7</sup> *The de la Huerta Disloyalty*, by Ignacio Enriquez, Governor of Chihuahua at the time. A friend both to Calles and de la Huerta, he went to the City of Mexico in an attempt to compound their differences, and his pamphlet is a full and detailed record of causes.

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la Huerta, so greatly did he love him.<sup>7</sup> Stronger and stronger, however, grew the rumor that the young Secretary of the Treasury was the victim of political ambitions, and these reports received confirmation on September 24th when he rudely severed relations with President Obregon, manufacturing a pretext, and resigned from the Cabinet. At once every force of greed, discontent and reaction grew clamant—*haciendados* bitter against Obregon's land policy, international financiers fearful of Calles and his honesty, "generals" unwilling to be retired to private life, grafters kicked out of office—all rallied to the banner of de la Huerta, who walked the streets as a king. Each day it became more apparent that he was not only a candidate for the presidency, but a potential rebel, willing to promote his designs by armed force.

Even as de la Huerta left his office, there came a rush of telegrams from Mr. Lamont, flatly accusing the Mexican Government of bad faith in that the funds from the export tax on oil were not being forwarded, thus breaking a solemn covenant and defaulting on the first annual payment. Stunned by the charge, for he had assumed that the oil taxes were being deposited, President Obregon ordered an investigation, and on October 17th, Alberto J. Pani, the new Secretary of the Treasury, reported a condition bordering on bankruptcy. He alleged that de la Huerta, with the prodigality of a Roman emperor distributing largesse, had used the Treasury as a private purse, and charged that thousands of men were on the payroll without pretense of service; that newspapers had been subsidized and newspaper men given large sums; that senators and representatives had had their salaries paid in advance, not only to the ends of their terms, but far beyond; that "generals" were the recipients of unsecured loans; that powerful merchants had been importing goods duty-free; and that governors and politicians enjoyed "commissionerships" at large salaries.

Commenting upon the Pani report, President Obregon declared that this "moral and financial bankruptcy" was due to the fact that de la Huerta had "disposed of, without authorization and without previous notice to the presidential office, several millions of pesos taken from sources of income which were destined exclusively for payment of the exterior debt." Also that the "Secretary of the Treasury issued against the financial agency in New York drafts

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for many millions of pesos, knowing beforehand that he was using funds that did not exist, with probabilities remote of receiving them in time."

De la Huerta answered at once, asserting that it was a base political attempt to stain his honor, inspired solely by Obregon's desire to destroy him as a presidential candidate, but overlooking the fact that he had not yet announced his candidacy, and that as far as open pledges went, he himself was still committed to Calles. This oversight he remedied the following day, offering himself as a candidate, and at the same time promising startling revelations unless "the hidden hand, following the same road as with Francisco Villa, does not take my head from my shoulders." Villa had been shot down in Durango the previous summer, and all the evidence showed that he had met his death at the hands of men seeking revenge for the murders of friends and relatives, yet de la Huerta threw these facts aside and charged Obregon and Calles with assassination.

What was his actual plan can never be known. Probability points to the theory that he had not meant to leave the Capital, confident that he could seize the government when he chose to strike. Now, however, with Obregon aroused and on guard, a change in plan became imperative, and after a series of fulminations, the first week in December saw him slipping away to Vera Cruz. General Guadalupe Sánchez, military commander of the port, received him with open arms, and at once the call to revolution was given. On the instant, seventy-five "generals" deserted with their troops; governors of many states repudiated their allegiance to the federal government; fully one hundred members of Congress fled the Capital and joined the revolt, and in a day, virtually, the Obregon administration was weakened to a point where collapse seemed inevitable.

### 34: The de la Huerta Rebellion

THE sudden sweep of disloyalty did more than rock the foundations of government; it stripped veneers away—the concealments afforded by fine words and high-sounding phrases—and Mexico, left naked, was seen to be in as parlous a state as in the days of Santa Anna. Obregon, looked upon as the choice product of a new order, hailed as one who had rock-bedded the public service in honesty and efficiency, stood convicted of the same fatal defects that had always been the curse of the nation. At every point there was plain evidence that he had rested content with the mere announcement of reforms, that when he had declared that a thing *would* be done, he felt that it *had* been done; and that, after a noble program had been declared, there was no further need to give it thought. As Rivera once wrote in indictment of his people: "In theories the boldness of Don Quixote, and in practice the inability to conquer obstacles and the phlegm of Sancho Panza."

De la Huerta's charged misuse of public funds must have been going on for months—openly, boldly—yet he went unchecked, and even when the Pani report accused him of gross betrayal of trust, he was not arrested and tried for his crimes. Here again we may see the evil persistence of an ancient point of view—the Santa Anna theory—that politicians are above the law and in no wise subject to the discipline of the criminal courts.

Obregon's appeal to the United States for arms was no less revelatory. Nothing was more firmly believed than that the military establishment of Mexico had been completely reorganized. For three years money had been spent upon it without stint; great factories existed for the manufacture of munitions, and there was the repeated boast that the army, while small, challenged comparison with that of any other nation in point of equipment. In the hour of pressing need it was seen that rifles, cartridges, and artillery were un-

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usable by reason of gross negligence and corruption in the making, and that, of the vaunted air force, not one machine could lift itself above the ground. As in the time of Diaz and Santa Anna, the money had been stolen and no administrative check existed for the prevention or discovery of this open graft.

Even more ghastly was the showing with respect to the "public virtue" that was assumed to have been developed. For fourteen years, ever since the overthrow of Diaz, the country had been deluged with talk of the New Patriotism—Huerta and Carranza had been deposed because they menaced the fulfillment of shining ideals—yet no sooner had the call to treason sounded than loyalty and faith were seen to be a mask for the concealment of old and unchanged rapacities. The conduct of de la Huerta has been commented upon. No less incredible was the utter dishonor of General Enrique Estrada. This man had been lifted from obscurity by Obregon, promoted steadily throughout the various revolts and, to crown these honors, served as Minister of War in the first Obregon Cabinet. Afterwards appointed to a high military command in the State of Jalisco, favors and emoluments had been heaped upon him, and the President held him in his heart as a friend. Upon the outbreak of the de la Huerta insurrection, Estrada hurried to Obregon, assured him of loyalty, asked him to act as best man at his daughter's wedding, borrowed money, and returned to Jalisco to lead his troops into rebellion.

General Fortunato Maycotte, another exalted by Obregon, was even selected as his right hand in the operations against the rebels, and when the President left for the front, Maycotte smothered him with embraces and deafened him with protestations of love and loyalty. Before the train was out of sight, this man seized all the money and ammunition upon which he could lay his hands, and together with others that he seduced, left for Oaxaca by special trains, and led the governor, Garcia Vigil, into rebellion. In similar fashion, Rafael Zubaran Capmany, formerly Minister of Commerce, turned away from Obregon's home to betray him.

Two other illustrative cases may be cited, less for the treachery involved than for the light they throw on the causes of Mexican disorder. Guadalupe Sanchez may be remembered as the military

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commander at Vera Cruz who betrayed Carranza and then brought about his assassination. In this man's course there was no single redeeming feature. He had not been one of those who risked life and liberty by bold rebellion at the outset, but had protested devotion until the very last, inviting the fleeing First Chief to Vera Cruz, where treachery resulted in Carranza's assassination. Sanchez should have been shot, or, failing that, drummed from the army as in disgrace. It was the Mexican custom, however, to reward traitors—an inheritance from Santa Anna—and Obregon lacked the courage to go against it. He continued Sanchez in command at Vera Cruz as a general, and Sanchez was the first to sell himself to the rebellion.

The case of General Romulo Figueroa is equally illuminative. Well in advance of the de la Huerta uprising, Figueroa had led a *cuartelazo* in the State of Guerrero, robbing and burning with the abandon of a true guerrilla, actuated by no other motive than lawlessness. Brought to bay by federal troops, he was permitted to surrender under a promise of absolute amnesty, and in addition, had locomotives and cars provided for the return of his disbanded troops to their homes. Here again we encounter another Mexican tradition—the fixed habit of looking upon rebellion as a game, defeat meaning no more than temporary demotion—and the result was as always. Figueroa joined de la Huerta on the instant, using his railroad equipment against the government that had loaned it to him as an act of mercy. On every side there was this same wantonness of treachery. Salvador Alvarado, Secretary of the Treasury during de la Huerta's administration, took the field; fully one-half of the state governors went over to the rebels, and there was the same wholesale defection on the part of military commanders and their troops.

Not even in the days of Santa Anna was there ever a more shameless, unjustifiable rebellion. It is true that a clamor was raised to the effect that President Obregon sought to "impose" Calles on the people, but in support of this charge there was not one specific accusation of wrong-doing or impropriety. No voice was raised to charge the President with dishonesty or injustice, interference with the machinery of election, or attempt at coercion. As if to accentuate

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the baldness of their treason, the rebels did not even have the excuse of a passionate personal devotion, for de la Huerta was not of the soldier class or popular with it.

About the whole thing, from the very first, was the ugly reek of corruption and venality. Such as were not bought up during de la Huerta's control of the Treasury, were not long in learning that the war chest of the rebellion would be well filled, for the whisper flew that powerful outside interests were involved—interests eager for a complacent President who would give them a free hand with Mexico's oil, minerals, timber and other natural resources. Not only would there be this steady golden flow from mysterious sources, but also the profit from pillage and blackmail, while the certainty of the rebellion's success promised a rich division of spoils and offices at the end. All knew well, even as de la Huerta knew, that another civil war would set Mexico back for a generation, yet thousands threw honor to the winds and rushed to receive their thirty pieces of silver.

What is to be borne in mind, however, is that these men were nearly all politicians and military commanders. From the very announcement of his rebellion de la Huerta was faced by the bitter antagonism of the masses, and each day made it clearer that the struggle was between a professional-soldier class and the citizenry of the nation. President Obregon's problem was the arming of these citizens as they came forward by thousands to offer their lives in defense of free institutions. His Treasury was empty, due to waste and embezzlement, and he was without the secret sources from which de la Huerta was able to draw unlimited funds. In his bitter necessity, he was forced to swallow his pride and turn to the United States, begging permission to buy arms on credit.

The plight of President Coolidge was painful in the extreme, and his one comfort was that Secretary of State Hughes shared the misery. From 1912 to 1920, the Republican party had abused and berated Woodrow Wilson for "meddling in Mexico," and now Mr. Coolidge and Mr. Hughes saw themselves forced into a like course. They knew that if they did not grant Obregon's request, it meant the overthrow of the government they had recognized a few

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short months before, and a return to chaos. Not daring to force these consequences, the application to purchase war material was granted "in view of the importance of stability and orderly constitutional procedure in the neighboring republic," and shipments began pouring across the Border.

Even so, the rebellion would have succeeded easily had it possessed a leader worthy of the name, for the first few weeks saw it in control of almost every strategic point. Vera Cruz, the principal port—its customs an important source of revenue—was the rebel capital; Puebla, the second city in Mexico, had to be evacuated by the federals as a result of Maycotte's treachery; not only was Yucatan taken, but Felipe Carillo, the famous Governor, was butchered together with his three brothers; Enrique Estrada held the rich city of Guadalajara and the entire State; Oaxaca was lost to the government by the defection of Governor Vigil; the Tampico oil district was under rebel control; the States of Tabasco, Campeche, and San Luis Potosí were rebel territory entirely; there was widespread revolt in Michoacán and Zacatecas; Hippolyte Villa, Francisco's brother, terrorized Durango; and to complete the picture, word came that the entire Mexican consular service in Germany had declared for de la Huerta, taking all monies with them.

It will thus be seen that the City of Mexico was virtually surrounded: with Estrada on the west, Maycotte, Figueroa and Vigil on the south, and Sanchez on the east, while four of the five railroad routes leading to the north were in the hands of the rebels. Strategy was not needed for victory, only leadership and swift, decisive action. In its utter lack of these essentials the rebellion stood stamped as a motley crew of mercenaries, without larger motive than plunder, condemned to division and confusion by each rascal's refusal to trust the other.

Whatever President Obregon's failures in decision during peace, the compulsion of circumstances restored his force and courage to their old vigor, and these qualities balanced the scale against the advantages of the enemy. By sheer power of will he held wavering men to their allegiance, fired loyalty with high resolve, and frightened the rebels into inaction while he organized an army and waited for military supplies from the United States. General Calles, put-

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ting his candidacy by, called to the workers of the nation, and they came from shop and field, as pathetically resolute as in the days of Hidalgo.

Late in December Puebla was recaptured, a bold stroke that vastly bettered Obregon's position, for now he was placed so as to prevent a juncture between Sanchez and Figueroa. Neither of these generals, it may be mentioned, came to Maycotte's aid, although the importance of holding Puebla was so obvious as even to have impressed a child's mind. Feinting first at Estrada in Jalisco, then at Sanchez in Vera Cruz, darting from one front to the other with a brave show of contemplated aggression, Obregon herded the rebels as though they had been cattle, and by the end of January was ready to strike. Shipments were at hand from the United States—Springfield rifles and good cartridges for his citizen troops, staunch aeroplanes for his flyers, and machine-guns to substitute for his worthless field pieces—and it was with a stout heart that he marched to the taking of Vera Cruz. At Esperanza, midway between the Capital and the sea, Sanchez and the rebel hordes were waiting, confident in their strength of numbers and position. All day the battle raged, and even as the issue hung in the balance, victory was decided in a manner that stigmatized the whole de la Huerta movement more comprehensively than all that could be said or written. A battalion of professional soldiers—various garrisons from Tabasco—deserted to the federals in a body, and Sanchez fled the field.

The campaign was really won by this first battle. As Obregon raced forward without a halt, the rebels abandoned impregnable positions, the brutish Sanchez showing himself as destitute of courage as of military knowledge. Orizaba and Cordova surrendered without resistance, and as the federals appeared before Vera Cruz on February 5th, de la Huerta, his government and his generals fled by sea to Tabasco, leaving their dupes to fend for themselves. Here it was that Obregon broke away from an old tradition, for when approached with a request for amnesty, he stated flatly that while pardons waited for such common soldiers as would lay down their arms, leaders were to expect nothing save the death penalty.

Having finished in the Vera Cruz region, the President accomplished a swift concentration on the western front, and at Ocotlán,

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fifty miles southeast of Guadalajara, gave battle to Estrada and Dieguez on February 10th. The two armies were equally matched as to numbers, but the rebels were heavily intrenched on rising ground with their front lines resting on the banks of the swift flowing Lerma. All were professional soldiers, too—men who had drawn pay for years as the nation's defense—yet the night saw them defeated and demoralized by mere militia, volunteers come from field and factory to fight reaction. With desperate bravery, Obregon's ranks swept across the river and flung themselves against the heights, and after a furious engagement lasting eleven hours, Estrada led his troops in panic-stricken flight. Marching to Guadalajara, Obregon occupied the city without resistance, and from this time on the rebellion degenerated into a fox-hunt. The capture of Tuxpam in late February rid the oil region of rebels; de la Huerta and other leaders fled in March to dig burrows for themselves in the United States; guerrilla bands were run down, one after the other, and in April a last decisive blow was struck by the taking of Oaxaca and, incidentally, the prompt execution of Governor Vigil, General Dieguez, and General Marcial Cavazos.<sup>1</sup>

After four months of precarious balancing over an abyss, Mexico was once again on fairly firm ground, but the facts of salvation were not such as to justify the lavish distribution of laurel leaves that followed. The rebellion had revealed a public service as thoroughly rotted as at any time in history, and proved the army to be the same old compound of treachery, corruption, and betrayal. Let it be said again that the de la Huerta movement did not fail from any lack of strength, but because it did not possess one single competent, courageous leader. Even so, the battle of Esperanza—upon the outcome of which hung the whole fate of the government—was decided by the desertion of the Tabasco battalions. The one cause for any rejoicing was the conduct of President Obregon himself, and the manner in which the masses—the citizenry—distinguished between patriotism and treason, and took arms in defense of liberty, law, and order.

Calmly laying aside his khaki uniform, General Calles resumed his campaign where he had left it off. Angel Flores, Governor of

<sup>1</sup> Alvarado, Maycotte, and Figueroa were other leaders captured and shot.

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Sinaloa, opposed him as the candidate of the conservative Liberals, and the issues were well debated. At the election, Calles won by a large majority, and on December 1st Obregon surrendered office to him, the first peaceful presidential succession in nearly fourscore years.

## 35: The Future and Its Challenge

ONE of Mexico's greatest tragedies is the persistent Sisyphean note. Slowly, agonizingly, stones are rolled up hill only to roll down again.

As will have been seen, the bitter controversy of 1926 between President Calles and the Roman Catholic Church could not be called in any sense a new quarrel, but merely the reopening of the struggle begun by Hidalgo and Morelos, and carried to a successful conclusion by Benito Juárez. The Constitution of 1857, first fruit of the people's rebellion, separated Church and State, established religious freedom, abolished ancient privileges that put the clergy above the law, forbade monastic orders, ended the Church's control of education, and nationalized all of the Church's property, only permitting the *use* of such buildings as were necessary for exclusively religious purposes.

The Church, appealing to arms, organized and financed the uprising of Felix Zuloaga. A solidly Catholic population, led by Catholics, crushed Zuloaga and Miramon, and indorsed the Constitution together with the Laws of Reform that gave it effect. The second and more desperate attempt of the Church to regain its supremacy likewise met with failure, for even French bayonets were unable to keep Maximilian on his throne; Juárez, grim and indomitable in his insistence upon the sovereignty of the State, returned to power, and Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada, succeeding Juárez, drove forward with the same steadfast purpose.

Porfirio Diaz did not dare to attempt a change, and the Constitution of 1917, born of the revolution against Diaz, incorporated the provisions of the Constitution of 1857 with respect to religion. The separation of Church and State was reaffirmed, and new emphasis placed upon religious freedom and non-sectarian instruction in all primary schools. One addition was made—"Only a Mexican by birth may be a minister of any religious creed in Mexico"—a frank effort to end the dominance of foreign priests and prelates, at the

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same time building up a native clergy in sympathy with national aspirations.

With the Constitution in operation as the organic law of the land, there was every indication that the fierce battle of one hundred years had found its peaceful conclusion. Seemingly satisfied that the Church accepted the inevitable with good grace and in good faith, Carranza did not give effect to the more drastic provisions of the Constitution, and Obregon, coming to power, contented himself with a reassertion of the State's sovereignty and a new affirmation of Mexico's right to religious liberty. Even when compelled to dismiss the Papal Nuncio, Monseigneur Filippi, for activities that were deemed political, he did not pursue the matter.

President Calles, concerned with civil problems, paid no heed to the Church until called upon to dismiss the Papal Legate, Archbishop Carruana, for certain breaches of the law, but following the example of Obregon, let dismissal close the incident. In February, 1926, however, Archbishop Mora y del Rio was quoted in the public press as fiercely denouncing the Constitution, not only the religious clauses, but as a whole, whereupon President Calles accepted the challenge, and once again the nation was convulsed by the old quarrel between Church and State.

On July 23, the President issued decrees putting the religious provisions of the Constitution of 1917 into effect, requiring priests to register, and particularly striking at clerical control of the primary schools. Two days later appeared a pastoral letter, signed by the hierarchy, that set August 1 as the date for the suspension of all church services requiring the offices of a priest, and the spokesman of the Church in Mexico, Bishop Pascual Diaz, drew the battle lines by a declaration that "above the Constitution are the rights of God."

The President returned a steadfast refusal to rescind his decrees, and when religious services were suspended, exercised the government's ownership, and placed the vacated temples under care of municipal committees until such time as the pastors chose to return and conform to the law, meanwhile leaving them open for the worship of the people. The workers of the country, through their organizations, massed solidly in support of the Government, Congress and every state legislature gave the same support, and as these lines

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are being written, it would seem that the people of Mexico are as solidly behind Calles as they were behind Benito Juárez when he declared the separation of Church and State in 1857.

The land problem, confidently assumed to have been solved, was still another complication that President Calles was called upon to face at the very start of his administration. The Mexican agrarian law, written in the first flush of revolutionary enthusiasm, gave each state and territory the right to decide the acreage which individuals or corporations could own, and authorized the expropriation of the surplus, payment to be made in bonds of local issue at a price ten per cent. of the tax appraisement of the land's value. When one remembers the evil conditions that prevailed under Diaz—the vast holdings of absentee landlords and the exclusion of great tracts from productive use—the principle can not but be applauded, but President Calles was not long in discovering that the working out had resulted in conditions almost as ugly as those that had been attacked.

A survey of the Valley of Teotihuacan showed that even after two great divisions, 90 per cent. of the 10,500 acres of arable land was owned by seven men, with the remaining 10 per cent. in the hands of small owners, and 7,914 people without any land at all. Peasants, excited by political demagogues, were seizing harvests, and in many instances the dishonesty of courts and agrarian officials evolved an organized system of blackmail. As a consequence, the production of food commodities in 1925 was less than that of 1910.

Although elected on a Labor ticket, President Calles ordered the arrest of Communist agitators, and put the whole force of Government behind the correction of agrarian abuses. Courts and commissions have been checked and purged, blackmail and confiscation have been stopped, and the creation of a system of rural credits, together with the inauguration of large irrigation projects, has made it possible for the Mexican to hold his land and till it. A program of highway building also has been launched, and pushed as fast as the condition of the Treasury permits.

The problem of education is still another that strikes the Sisyphean note. Much that was thought to have been done was discovered to have been left undone, and in his drive on illiteracy,

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President Calles has been compelled to build from the very ground. Schools are being raised in every community, and several thousand pioneer teachers—"missionaries," so-called—are working among the far Indian villages, teaching not only the three R's, but infant care, cooking, sanitation and home making. Along with high schools, manual training schools and normal schools for the preparation of teachers, five agricultural colleges are under way.

Prophecy is futile business in connection with things Mexican. In 1910 competent observers saw no signs of weakness in the absolutism of Diaz; two weeks before Madero's downfall, he was regarded as having surmounted his difficulties; the stability of the Carranza government was being loudly praised by visiting investigators even as it fell; and on the first day of December, 1923, Obregon was congratulating himself and the country upon the achievement of peace and the end of revolution. All that may safely be said of Plutarco Elias Calles is that he seems to be better fitted to grapple with Mexico's problems than any president since Benito Juárez. Like the great Zapoteco, he is a practical idealist, with a passion for results, and by experience, no less than by temperament, he seems fitted for his place. Born in poverty—water-carrier, school teacher and merchant by successive stages—he has known every phase of the civil struggle, while his years as a soldier, governor, and department head have let him see deep into the political life of his country.

In addressing himself to the great problems that pressed upon him when he assumed the presidency, he showed courage and decision. Denounced as a Bolshevik throughout his campaign, he returned a flat refusal to the propaganda proposals of Soviet Russia, and made it clear that his program had no room for lawless radicalism or incendiary agitation. It was assumed that he would be a rubber stamp for the unions, yet at the outset he met the threat of a railway strike by federalizing the railroad employees, and followed that up by abolishing the vicious pass system, largely responsible for the railroad deficit. He also authorized a reconsideration of wage schedules. Thousands of useless, superfluous employees were quickly separated from the government payroll, and holidays are now four in the year instead of fifty-four.

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His announcement that the army would be reduced from seventy-five thousand to twenty-five thousand officers and men was looked upon as merely the usual gesture—every Mexican president makes the declaration—but his subsequent orders forced the unpleasant conclusion that Calles meant it. A ruling was made that gaudy uniforms were to give way to simple khaki, and that every officer would have to live on his salary. These edicts were followed by the arrest and trial of several prominent generals who still insisted upon “perquisites,” and the establishment of a concentration camp for the retirement of malcontents. The private purchase of army supplies—the source of greatest graft—was discontinued; the picturesque Chapultepec Guards, costing \$250,000 a year, were abolished, and there was the further bland proclamation that when the army was not engaged in chasing bandits—each commander being held personally responsible for order in his district—it would be put to work at road-building.

As many of the de la Huerta “generals” who faced firing-squads were governors as well, the situation in the states has been cleared up to no small degree. Civilians are now in control for the most part, young men with ideals, humanitarian enthusiasm, and sense enough to recognize that states’ rights must not be permitted to override federal authority. It is also the case that the last ten years have seen the slow development of a middle class in Mexico, naturally averse to civil war; and the improvement in the condition of workers is another aid to peace. When the peon received fifteen cents a day, the three meals of camp life made an irresistible appeal, but now that he gets from a dollar to a dollar and a half, insurrection is no longer the one alternative to starvation.

Even with these credit items, and when the most generous estimate is placed upon his achievements with respect to the land question, education, demobilization and internal improvements, President Calles faces an administrative task almost without parallel for its seemingly insuperable obstacles. Let it be said again, as was said in the beginning, that Mexico is not yet a union or even a nation; only a loose confederation of regional groups. Of the population of fifteen million, three million are white, five million are of mixed blood, and seven million are Indians.

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Scattered throughout the length and breadth of the land and divided by vast mountain ranges and burning deserts, are Zapotecos, Huicholes, Mazatecos, Mixes, Tarascos, Mixtecos, Mayas, Tepancos, Triquis, Tzendales, Tzotziles, Zapotecos de Tehuantepec, Zoques, Cahuillos, Mayos, Opatas, Papagos, Tarahumaris, Aztecas, Otomis, Tepehuans, Huaztecos, Teotihuacanos, Tepehuas, Totonacos, Coras, Cuicatecos, Chinantecos, Chochos, Chontales and Huaves, to mention only the *major* tribes. Speaking no tongue but their own, for the most part ignorant of Spanish and often unable to understand the language of other groups in the same neighborhood, these Indians are as primitive as in the days of Cortes, and just about as poverty-stricken, undernourished and miserable. The lack of facilities for communication—railroads and highways—have doomed the average rural community to an almost incredible isolation, and, still further imprisoned by their own ignorance, the wretched people are without everything that makes for a decent civilized existence. Dr. Manual Gamio, after a recent survey in the Valley of Teotihuacan, was compelled to return this report:

There is not one surgeon there to practice medicine and to teach hygienic methods; there is no lawyer to protect them from numberless impositions; nor is there an engineer nor an architect who might teach them how to build their homes on more hygienic principles, or to advise them on the construction of drains, proper canalization for irrigating purposes, etc. There is no agricultural authority to whom they could go for advice to improve agricultural methods and subsequent improvement in their crops. They cannot consult a veterinarian to teach them how to ward off epizootic and other diseases, or how to improve the raising of live stock. In short, there is no one with proper authority or knowledge in any one of the fields that would lead to a general uplift of the local conditions, notwithstanding the fact that this region is at the very door of the Capital.

These conditions are not exceptional but typical, for at every turn there is distressing evidence of centuries of misrule. Illiteracy runs close to eighty-five per cent. and the school population is five per cent. of the total instead of twenty; fifteen million people starve in a country well able to grow foodstuffs for one hundred million;

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bankruptcy is a chronic condition, although Mexico has been called "the treasure house of the world"; the rate of infant mortality is shocking; men, women, and children die by the thousands of preventable diseases; and even the practice of Christianity is fouled by perpetual heathenism. In many of the rural districts religious conditions have improved but little since the time when Humboldt saw Indians "naked and adorned with tinkling bells, perform savage dances around the altar, while a monk of St. Francis elevated the Host."

It is not merely one thing that Calles' reforms are called upon to attempt, but *everything*. Nor can the task be taken up piecemeal; what has to be worked out is an all-embracing general plan, for the needs of Mexico are so curiously dovetailed as to invite disaster if it is attempted to meet one without consideration of the others. What is the use of teaching people to read and write if they are to remain in such poverty that they can not buy books or even newspapers? Where is the point in land division unless the peon is guarded in possession of his farm by state aid in the matter of seeds, implements, and irrigation? How may he utilize this help if he is not taught modern methods of agriculture? What is the good of an eight-hour day law if even a fifteen-hour day does not yield a decent living? What is the incentive to industry and thrift if a rotten public service continues to loot the Treasury?

Schools, railroads, sanitation, land distribution, rural credits, irrigation projects, the basic reorganization of industry and agriculture along modern lines, the development of administrative efficiency and a sense of public virtue, road-building—these tremendous reforms must be carried forward in harmony and unison if unhappy millions are to be lifted into the light and fused into a self-respecting, self-supporting nation.

Were Calles able to float a huge foreign loan, all might be well, for he could launch his general reform plan immediately and in full vigor, drowning every murmur of discontent in the hum of wholesome activity. This is an impossibility, however, for even did the country's financial condition justify bankers in lending, there is his own people's state of mind to be considered. It is not

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alone that bitter experiences have filled the Mexican with fear of foreign capital; politicians have played upon his national pride until it has reached the point of insane vanity, and every recourse to outside aid is looked upon with suspicion as a sale, surrender, or profound humiliation. Calles knows that international amity is an essential to Mexican restoration, yet his attitude to other countries must continue to be one of suspicion and distrust, if he would not forfeit his people's faith and lose his chance of service.

There is, of course, Mexico's wealth of natural resources to be considered. In the matter of oil alone, though production has exceeded 1,300,000,000 barrels in the last twenty-five years, the petroleum deposits have scarcely been scratched, for George Otis Smith, Director of the United States Geological Survey, puts the output of unproved territory at 1,250,000,000 barrels. Since much of this territory is now owned by the nation, as a result of Article 27, its wise development will spell the difference between bankruptcy and solvency. Yet here again Calles is faced by obstacles, for wise and honest administration, essential to the necessary program of economy, depends entirely upon the development of a political virtue that will regard public service as a trust, not a license to cheat and steal.

The corrupt administration of the Treasury under de la Huerta has already been commented upon, yet it was much the same in every other department of the government. Even after Obregon had made two changes in the office of Secretary of Agriculture, Calles found a waste of \$2,000,000 a year—private automobiles bought and maintained at public expense, hundreds of “expert surveyors” who had never handled a surveying instrument, padded payrolls, and open embezzlement. The enormous difficulty of the task lies in the fact that these “perquisites” have come to be legalized by custom, even the best and most honorable of Mexicans viewing the practice with indulgence. Shortly before he joined de la Huerta in rebellion, Enrique Estrada solicited a gift of \$10,000 from the Treasury by way of a contribution to the expenses of a wedding. When the matter came to the ears of President Obregon, however, he did not blaze forth in righteous anger at the impudence of the re-

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quest, but ordered the money handed over, at the same time asking Estrada to forgive delay.<sup>1</sup> It is this habit of thought that Calles will have to destroy—it is a new conception of public honesty that he is called upon to develop.

No executive ever put foot to a longer, wearier road. Even if he succeeds in straightening out the land tangle, and finds the money for irrigation projects, rural credits, highways, railroads, and the development of the educational system, he will have made but the first steps in the rehabilitation of his country. It will be several generations, at least, before education reaches the individual life, and a still longer time before tribal divisions and lingual barriers are beaten down to a point where seven million Indians can be brought into the living stream of citizenship.

Nothing is more obvious than that responsibility rests upon the United States no less than upon Plutarco Elias Calles. If property rights are to be put above human rights; if Washington is to nag, harass, and quarrel, be quick to take offense and magnify every incident into an issue, it is certain that Calles can be made to fall short of the necessary achievement, and out of his failure may come a greater chaos than the unhappy land has yet known. On the other hand, a "Mexican policy" conceived in generous helpfulness and warm humanity may give Calles the time and strength to solve immediate problems, and permit the transmission of the office to some worthy successor, equally dedicated to the task of peace and progress.

When there is consideration of Mexico's tragic history—the long centuries of oppression, betrayal, and stark wretchedness—how can the outside world deny its one possible contribution—*patience* and *sympathy*?

<sup>1</sup> Dr. E. J. Dillon, in *Current History Magazine* for July, 1924.

## Appendix



No. I

THE HISTORY FACTORY OF HUBERT HOWE BANCROFT

Aside from the campaign lies of Webster, Clay, Corwin and other Whig orators, the works of Hubert Howe Bancroft provide the principal source of material for attack upon the faith and honor of the United States with respect to the war with Mexico in 1846. His "histories," with their bitter denunciation of America's course, have been relied upon implicitly by subsequent writers, both in the United States and Mexico, supplying them with alleged facts and molding their point of view.

One glance at the Bancroft output—thirty-nine massive tomes—instantly inspires a certain amount of suspicion, for any single volume would have been the work of a lifetime. Suspicion, however, becomes conviction after the most cursory reading, for not only are there innumerable divergences of opinion, but a constant succession of startling style changes. As a consequence, the writer commenced an investigation, coming, in the end, upon a literary deception almost incredible in its boldness and extent. In no sense was Hubert Howe Bancroft the author of the histories that bear his name. All that he did was to hire a small army of literary hacks to collect, digest, and write, his own contribution being a few lines at the beginning or end of a chapter, or perhaps a sentence or two scribbled in the body.

In 1870, at the age of thirty-nine, Bancroft was a printer and publisher in San Francisco, a man of little education, but possessed of undeniable force supported by colossal egotism. The preparation of guide-books gave him the idea of a series of histories of the Pacific Coast states, the plan widening eventually until it embraced histories of the Native Races, Central America, Mexico, Arizona, Texas, and New Mexico. Once well under way, fully six hundred note-makers, clippers, classifiers, and indexers were in Bancroft's employ, passing their product on to a staff of "literary assistants" who ground out the histories, writing always in the first person.

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The most prominent of these "assistants" were Henry L. Oak, ex-editor of a religious journal; William Nemos, a Finn; Thomas Savage, half Latin and half American; Albert Schmidt, a German; Ivan Petroff, a Russian; Mrs. Frances Fuller Victor; Enrique Cerutti, an Italian; and J. J. Peatfield, Walter M. Fisher, Alfred Bates and Arundel Harcourt, four Englishmen. These were the real authors of Bancroft's histories so far as writing was concerned, although five or six more contributed scattered chapters in this and that volume.

Whatever may be said of Bancroft's ethical sense, there can be no question as to his hard common sense, for he ran his literary factory on the sound business lines of an industrial plant. The working hours were from seven-fifteen in the morning to six in the evening, with half an hour for lunch, and as the Master Historian made clear in a letter to Mrs. Victor, "I am not satisfied with old hands now who don't give me, say, four or five pages a day all ready for the printer." At the time of employment, Bancroft made it clear that he was buying their brains as well as their time—that what *they* wrote *he* would sign—and while the authors entered into no agreement of secrecy, it was well understood that they held their jobs on condition of silence. Not until years later, and after Bancroft had been given degrees by many colleges, was there any disclosure of the truth.

With respect to the *History of Mexico*, our object of concern, Oak and Nemos are in agreement on this statement of fact: Bancroft wrote the introduction to the first volume, and Nemos wrote the rest; of the second volume, Nemos wrote two-thirds, and Savage and Peatfield furnished the rest; of the third volume, Nemos and Savage did about two-thirds, the other third being contributed by Peatfield and a man named Griffin. Of the fourth volume, Bancroft supplied one chapter, and Peatfield and Savage the remainder, with Nemos "assisting on parts." The fifth volume, covering the period between 1824 and 1861, was written by Savage principally, Nemos writing about one-fourth, and Peatfield contributing various chapters. The sixth volume was written by Nemos and Savage, with Peatfield and Oak assisting here and there.

The *History of the North Mexican States and Texas* was the

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joint work of Oak and Peatfield, the latter handling the Texas portion. It may be well also to give a certain amount of credit to Fisher and Harcourt, for, when a volume was finished, it was their duty to besprinkle it with poetical quotations and classical allusions.

It is not only the case that these men drew their information about the war of 1846 entirely from Mexican sources, but there is also plain evidence that they brought to their work certain bitter personal prejudices. Peatfield, the Englishman, had spent his life in Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Guatemala, and in addition to the influences of this environment, believed firmly that the United States had wronged Great Britain in the Oregon compromise. Savage, born in Havana, was the son of an American father and a French mother, and had lived in Cuba, Panama, and Salvador, running a government newspaper in Guatemala before entering Bancroft's employ in San Francisco. Aside from his love of the Latin race, his chief characteristic was a fanatical hatred of the South, though in this he was not more pronounced than Oak, a Maine Yankee.

Writing anonymously, and under no restraint of responsibility, what wonder then that they had no scruples about substituting prejudice for fact, making brutal assertions for which there was no warrant, and utterly perverting the plain truths of the record?

### No. 2

#### PRESIDENT WILSON'S INSTRUCTIONS TO MR. JOHN LIND

Press very earnestly upon the attention of those who are now exercising authority or wielding influence in Mexico the following considerations and advice:

The Government of the United States does not feel at liberty any longer to stand inactively by while it becomes daily more and more evident that no real progress is being made toward the establishment of a government at the City of Mexico which the country will obey and respect.

The Government of the United States does not stand in the same case with the other great Governments of the world in respect

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of what is happening or what is likely to happen in Mexico. We offer our good offices, not only because of our genuine desire to play the part of a friend, but also because we are expected by the powers of the world to act as Mexico's nearest friend.

We wish to act in the circumstances in the spirit of the most earnest and disinterested friendship. It is our purpose in whatever we do or propose in this perplexing and distressing situation not only to pay the most scrupulous regard to the sovereignty and independence of Mexico—that we take as a matter of course to which we are bound by every obligation of right and honor—but also to give every possible evidence that we act in the interest of Mexico alone, and not in the interest of any person or body of persons who may have personal or property claims in Mexico which they may feel that they have the right to press. We are seeking to counsel Mexico for her own good and in the interest of her own peace, and not for any other purpose whatever. The Government of the United States would deem itself discredited if it had any selfish or ulterior purpose in transactions where the peace, happiness, and prosperity of a whole people are involved. It is acting as its friendship for Mexico, not as any selfish interest, dictates.

The present situation in Mexico is incompatible with the fulfillment of international obligations on the part of Mexico, with the civilized development of Mexico herself, and with the maintenance of tolerable political and economic conditions in Central America. It is upon no common occasion, therefore, that the United States offers her counsel and assistance. All America cries out for a settlement.

A satisfactory settlement seems to us to be conditioned on—

(a) An immediate cessation of fighting throughout Mexico, a definite armistice solemnly entered into and scrupulously observed.

(b) Security given for an early and free election in which all will agree to take part.

(c) The consent of General Huerta to bind himself not to be a candidate for election as President of the Republic at this election.

(d) The agreement of all parties to abide by the results of the election and coöperate in the most loyal way in organizing and supporting the new administration.

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The Government of the United States will be glad to play any part in this settlement or in its carrying out which it can play honorably and consistently with international right. It pledges itself to recognize and in every way possible and proper to assist the administration chosen and set up in Mexico in the way and on the conditions suggested. . . .

### No. 3

#### THE NEW INTERNATIONALISM: FROM PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH AT MOBILE, ALABAMA, OCTOBER 27, 1913

. . . There is one peculiarity about the history of the Latin-American States which I am sure they are keenly aware of. You hear of "concessions" to foreign capitalists in Latin America. You do not hear of concessions to foreign capitalists in the United States. They are not granted concessions. They are invited to make investments. The work is ours, though they are welcome to invest in it. We do not ask them to supply the capital and do the work. It is an invitation, not a privilege; and States that are obliged, because their territory does not lie within the main field of modern enterprise and action, to grant concessions are in this condition, that foreign interests are apt to dominate their domestic affairs, a condition of affairs always dangerous and apt to become intolerable. What these States are going to see, therefore, is an emancipation from the subordination, which has been inevitable, to foreign enterprise and an assertion of the splendid character which, in spite of these difficulties, they have again and again been able to demonstrate. The dignity, the courage, the self-possession, the self-respect of the Latin-American States, their achievements in the face of all these adverse circumstances, deserve nothing but the admiration and applause of the world. They have had harder bargains driven with them in the matter of loans than any other peoples in the world. Interest has been exacted of them that was not exacted of anybody else, because the risk was said to be greater; and then securities were taken that destroyed the risk—an admirable arrangement for those who were forcing the terms! I rejoice in nothing so much as in the

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prospect that they will now be emancipated from these conditions, and we ought to be the first to take part in assisting in that emancipation. . . .

We must prove ourselves their friends and champions upon terms of equality and honor. You can not be friends upon any other terms than upon the terms of equality. You can not be friends at all except upon the terms of honor. We must show ourselves friends by comprehending their interest whether it squares with our own interest or not. It is a very perilous thing to determine the foreign policy of a nation in the terms of material interest. It not only is unfair to those with whom you are dealing, but it is degrading as regards your own actions.

Comprehension must be the soil in which shall grow all the fruits of friendship, and there is a reason and a compulsion lying behind all this which is dearer than anything else to the thoughtful men of America. I mean the development of constitutional liberty in the world. Human rights, national integrity, and opportunity as against material interests, that . . . is the issue which we now have to face. I want to take this occasion to say that the United States will never again seek one additional foot of territory by conquest. She will devote herself to showing that she knows how to make honorable and fruitful use of the territory she has, and she must regard it as one of the duties of friendship to see that from no quarter are material interests made superior to human liberty and national opportunity. I say this, not with a single thought that any one will gainsay it, but merely to fix in our consciousness what our real relationship with the rest of America is. It is the relationship of a family of mankind devoted to the development of true constitutional liberty. We know that that is the soil out of which the best enterprise springs. We know that this is a cause which we are making in common with our neighbors, because we have had to make it for ourselves.

Reference has been made here to-day to some of the national problems which confront us as a Nation. What is at the heart of all our national problems? It is that we have seen the hand of material interest sometimes about to close upon our dearest rights and possessions. We have seen material interests threaten constitutional

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freedom in the United States. Therefore we will now know how to sympathize with those in the rest of America who have to contend with such powers, not only within their borders but from outside their borders also.

I know what the response of the thought and heart of America will be to the program I have outlined, because America was created to realize a program like that. This is not America because it is rich. This is not America because it has set up for a great population great opportunities of material prosperity. America is a name which sounds in the ears of men everywhere as a synonym with individual opportunity because a synonym of individual liberty. I would rather belong to a poor nation that was free than to a rich nation that had ceased to be in love with liberty. But we shall not be poor if we love liberty, because the nation that loves liberty truly sets every man free to do his best and be his best, and that means the release of all the splendid energies of a great people who think for themselves. A nation of employees can not be free any more than a nation of employers can be.

In emphasizing the points which must unite us in sympathy and in spiritual interest with the Latin-American peoples we are only emphasizing the points of our own life, and we should prove ourselves untrue to our own traditions if we proved ourselves untrue friends to them. Do not think, therefore . . . that the questions of the day are mere questions of policy and diplomacy. They are shot through with the principles of life. We dare not turn from the principle that morality and not expediency is the thing that must guide us and that we will never condone iniquity because it is most convenient to do so. . . .

### No. 4

#### PAN-AMERICANISM: EXTRACTS FROM PRESIDENT WILSON'S ANNUAL MESSAGE TO CONGRESS, DECEMBER 7, 1915

There was a time in the early days of our own great nation and of the republics fighting their way to independence in Central and South America when the government of the United States looked

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upon itself as in some sort the guardian of the republics to the south of her as against any encroachments or efforts at political control from the other side of the water; felt it its duty to play the part even without invitation from them; and I think that we can claim that the task was undertaken with a true and disinterested enthusiasm for the freedom of the Americans and the unmolested self-government of her independent peoples. But it was always difficult to maintain such a rôle without offense to the pride of the peoples whose freedom of action we sought to protect, and without provoking serious misconceptions of our motives, and every thoughtful man of affairs must welcome the altered circumstances of the new day in whose light we now stand, when there is no claim of guardianship or thought of words, but, instead, a full and honorable association as of partners between ourselves and our neighbors, in the interest of all America, north and south. Our concern for the independence and prosperity of the states of Central and South America is not altered. We retain unabated the spirit that has inspired us throughout the whole life of our government and which was so frankly put into words by President Monroe. We still mean always to make a common cause of national independence and of political liberty in America. But that purpose is now better understood so far as it concerns ourselves. It is known not to be a selfish purpose. It is known to have in it no thought of taking advantage of any government in this hemisphere or playing its political fortunes for our own benefit. All the governments of America stand, so far as we are concerned, upon a footing of genuine equality and unquestioned independence.

We have been put to the test in the case of Mexico, and we have stood the test. Whether we have benefited Mexico by the course we have pursued remains to be seen. Her fortunes are in her own hands. But we have at least proved that we will not take advantage of her in her distress and undertake to impose upon her an order and government of our own choosing. Liberty is often a fierce and intractable thing, to which no bounds can be set, and to which no bounds of a few men's choosing ought ever to be set. Every American who has drunk at the true fountains of principle and tradition must subscribe without reservation to the high doctrine of the Virginia Bill

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of Rights, which in the great days in which our government was set up was everywhere amongst us accepted as the creed of free men. That doctrine is, "That government is, or ought to be, instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community"; that "of all the various modes and forms of government, that is the best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and that, when any government shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes a majority of the community hath an indubitable, inalienable, and indefeasible right to reform, alter, or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal." We have unhesitatingly applied that heroic principle to the case of Mexico, and now hopefully await the rebirth of the troubled Republic, which had so much of which to purge itself and so little sympathy from any outside quarter in the radical but necessary process. We will aid and befriend Mexico, but we will not coerce her; and our course with regard to her ought to be sufficient proof to all America that we seek no political suzerainty or selfish control.

The moral is, that the states of America are not hostile rivals but coöperating friends, and that their growing sense of community of interest, alike in matters political and in matters economic, is likely to give them a new significance as factors in international affairs and in the political history of the world. It presents them as in a very deep and true sense a unit in world affairs, spiritual partners, standing together because thinking together, quick with common sympathies and common ideals. Separated they are subject to all the cross-currents of the confused politics of a world of hostile rivalries; united in spirit and purpose they can not be disappointed of their peaceful destiny.

This is Pan-Americanism. It has none of the spirit of empire in it. It is the embodiment, the effectual embodiment, of the spirit of law and independence and liberty and mutual service.

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No. 5

## THE MONROE DOCTRINE, AS DEFINED BY PRESIDENT WILSON IN HIS SPEECH OF JANUARY 6, 1916

The Monroe Doctrine was proclaimed by the United States on her own authority. It has always been maintained, and always will be maintained, upon her own responsibility. But the Monroe Doctrine demanded merely that European Governments should not attempt to extend their political systems to this side of the Atlantic. It did not disclose the use which the United States intended to make of her power on this side of the Atlantic. It was a hand held up in warning, but there was no promise in it of what America was going to do with the implied and partial protectorate which she apparently was trying to set up on this side of the water, and I believe you will sustain me in the statement that it has been fears and suspicions on this score which have hitherto prevented the greater intimacy and confidence and trust between the Americas. The states of America have not been certain what the United States would do with her power. That doubt must be removed. And latterly there has been a very frank interchange of views between the authorities in Washington and those who represented the other states of this hemisphere, an interchange of views charming and hopeful, because based upon an increasingly sure appreciation of the spirit in which they were undertaken. These gentlemen have seen that, if America is to come into her own, into her legitimate own, in a world of peace and order, she must establish the foundations of amity, so that no one will hereafter doubt them.

I hope and I believe that this can be accomplished. These conferences have enabled me to foresee how it will be accomplished. It will be accomplished, in the first place, by the states of America uniting in guaranteeing to each other absolute political independence and territorial integrity. In the second place, and as a necessary corollary to that, guaranteeing the agreement to settle all pending boundary disputes as soon as possible by amiable process; by agreeing that all disputes among themselves, should they unhappily arise, will be handled by patient, impartial investigation and

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settled by arbitration; and the agreement necessary to the peace of the Americans, that no state of either continent will permit revolutionary expeditions against another state to be fitted out on its territory, and that they will prohibit the exportation of the munitions of war for the purpose of supplying revolutionists against neighboring governments.

You see what our thought is, not only the international peace of America, but the domestic peace of America. If American states are constantly in ferment, if any of them are constantly in ferment, there will be a standing threat to their relations with one another. It is just as much to our interest to assist each other to the orderly processes within our own borders as it is to orderly processes in our controversies with one another. These are very practical suggestions which have sprung up in the minds of thoughtful men, and I, for my part, believe that they are going to lead the way to something that America has prayed for for many a generation. For they are based in the first place, so far as the stronger states are concerned, upon the handsome principle of self-restraint and respect for the rights of everybody. They are based upon the principles of absolute political equality among the states, equality of right, not equality of indulgence.

They are based, in short, upon the solid, eternal foundations of justice and humanity. No man can turn away from these things without turning away from the hope of the world.

### No. 6

#### ON THE PERSHING EXPEDITION: A STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT WILSON, MARCH 25, 1916

As has already been announced, the expedition into Mexico was ordered under an agreement with the *de facto* Government of Mexico for the single purpose of taking the bandit Villa, whose forces had actually invaded the territory of the United States, and is in no sense intended as an invasion of that Republic or as an infringement of its sovereignty.

I have, therefore, asked the several news services to be good

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enough to assist the Administration in keeping this view of the expedition constantly before both the people of this country and the distressed and sensitive people of Mexico, who are very susceptible, indeed, to impressions received from the American press not only, but also very ready to believe that those impressions proceed from the views and objects of our Government itself. Such conclusions, it must be said, are not unnatural, because the main, if not the only, source of information for the people on both sides of the border is the public press of the United States.

In order to avoid the creation of erroneous and dangerous impressions in this way I have called upon the several news agencies to use the utmost care not to give news stories regarding this expedition the color of war, to withhold stories of troop movements and military preparations which might be given that interpretation, and to refrain from publishing unverified rumors of unrest in Mexico.

I feel that it is most desirable to impress upon both our own people and the people of Mexico the fact that the expedition is simply a necessary punitive measure, aimed solely at the elimination of the marauders who raided Columbus and who infest an unprotected district near the border, which they use as a base in making attacks upon the lives and property of our citizens within our own territory. It is the purpose of our commanders to coöperate in every possible way with the forces of General Carranza in removing this cause of irritation to both Governments, and retire from Mexican territory as soon as that object is accomplished.

It is my duty to warn the people of the United States that there are persons all along the border who are actively engaged in originating and giving as wide currency as they can to rumors of the most sensational and disturbing sort, which are wholly unjustified by the facts. The object of this traffic in falsehood is obvious. It is to create intolerable friction between the Government of the United States and the *de facto* Government of Mexico for the purpose of bringing about intervention in the interest of certain American owners of Mexican properties. This object can not be attained so long as sane and honorable men are in control of this Government, but very serious conditions may be created, unnecessary bloodshed may

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result, and the relations between the two Republics may be very much embarrassed.

### No. 7

#### THE FUTILITY OF FORCE: FROM PRESIDENT WILSON'S SPEECH OF JUNE 30, 1916

The easiest thing is to strike. The brutal thing is the impulsive thing. No man has to think before he takes aggressive action; but before a man really conserves the honor by realizing the ideals of the Nation he has to think exactly what he will do and how he will do it.

Do you think the glory of America would be enhanced by a war of conquest in Mexico? Do you think that any act of violence by a powerful nation against a weak neighbor would reflect distinction upon the annals of the United States?

Do you think that it is our duty to carry self-defense to a point of dictation into the affairs of another people? The ideals of America are written plain upon every page of American history. . . .

We have the evidence of a very competent witness, namely the first Napoleon, who said that as he looked back in the last days of his life upon so much as he knew of human history he had to record the judgment that force had never accomplished anything that was permanent. . . .

Force can sometimes hold things steady, until opinion has time to form, but no force that was ever exerted, except in response to that opinion, was ever a conquering and predominant force.

### No. 8

#### DOLLAR DIPLOMACY: FROM PRESIDENT WILSON'S ADDRESS OF JULY 4, 1916

The Department of State at Washington is constantly called upon to back up the commercial enterprises and the industrial enter-

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prises of the United States in foreign countries, and it at one time went so far in that direction that all its diplomacy came to be designated as "dollar diplomacy." It was called upon to support every man who wanted to earn anything anywhere if he was an American. But there ought to be a limit to that. There is no man who is more interested than I am in carrying the enterprise of American business men to every quarter of the globe. I was interested in it long before I was suspected of being a politician. I have been preaching it year after year as the great thing that lay in the future for the United States, to show her wit and skill and enterprise and influence in every country in the world. But observe the limit to all that which is laid upon us perhaps more than upon any other nation in the world. We set this Nation up—at any rate, we professed to set it up—to vindicate the rights of men. We did not name any differences between one race and another. We did not set up any barriers against any particular people. We opened our gates to all the world and said, "Let all men who wish to be free come to us and they will be welcome." We said, "This independence of ours is not a selfish thing for our own exclusive private use. It is for everybody to whom we can find the means of extending it." We can not with that oath taken in our youth, we can not with that great ideal set before us when we were a young people and numbered only a scant three millions, take upon ourselves, now that we are a hundred million strong, any other conception of duty than we then entertained. If American enterprise in foreign countries, particularly in those foreign countries which are not strong enough to resist us, takes the shape of imposing upon and exploiting the mass of the people of that country, it ought to be checked and not encouraged. I am willing to get anything for an American that money and enterprise can obtain except the suppression of the rights of other men. I will not help any man buy a power which he ought not to exercise over his fellow beings.

You know, my fellow countrymen, what a big question there is in Mexico. Eighty-five per cent. of the Mexican people have never been allowed to have any genuine participation in their own government or to exercise any substantial rights with regard to the very land they live upon. All the rights that men most desire have

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been exercised by the other fifteen per cent. Do you suppose that that circumstance is not sometimes in my thought? I know that the American people have a heart that will beat just as strong for those millions in Mexico as it will beat or has beaten for any other millions elsewhere in the world, and that when once they conceive what is at stake in Mexico, they will know what ought to be done in Mexico. I hear a great deal said about the loss of property in Mexico and the loss of the lives of foreigners, and I deplore these things with all my heart. Undoubtedly upon the conclusion of the present disturbed conditions in Mexico those who have been unjustly deprived of their property or in any wise unjustly put upon ought to be compensated. Men's individual rights have no doubt been invaded, and the invasion of those rights has been attended by many deplorable circumstances which ought some time in the proper way to be accounted for. But back of it all is the struggle of a people to come into its own; and while we look upon the incidents in the foreground let us not forget the great tragic reality in the background, which towers above the whole picture.



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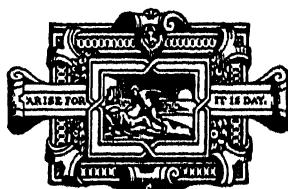
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